Thriving or surviving : reclaiming the Ignatian spiritual tradition as a resource for sustaining teachers today

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THRIVING OR SURVIVING: RECLAIMING THE IGNATIAN SPIRITUAL TRADITION AS A RESOURCE FOR SUSTAINING TEACHERS TODAY

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Abstract

No amount of curriculum drafting, standardized testing, or technological aids are sufficient to make a good school. A school is only as good as its participants – students, parents, auxiliary staff, leaders, and of course, teachers. Teachers teach for life – perhaps decreasingly the duration of a professional lifetime, but for the very life of the school and the lives of those who participate in it. So much depends on the spirit of the teacher and therefore on what is likely to sustain their spirits.

Fostering the spiritual lives of teachers is crucial; healthy spirituality can be a sustaining force, helping teachers to thrive rather than simply survive in our schools today. In this dissertation I address the need for intentionally engaging and nurturing the spirituality of teachers. I see spirituality as central to every teacher (indeed, every person), no matter who they are, where they work, or who or what they teach. It does not assume any particular religious tradition or religious faith at all. But it does account for the search for what is meaningful in life, and places this search within a transcendent horizon. The issue is important both for the personal and vocational development of teachers themselves and because their spiritual lives dynamically affect the educational life and experience of the whole school community. The dissertation goes on to suggest a spiritually inspired pedagogy drawn primarily but not exclusively from the Ignatian tradition.

Chapter 1 sets out to describe the lived reality for teachers today, and lifts up the desire to serve and relationality as two great motivators in the decisions to enter and stay in the teaching profession. Chapter 2 re-frames these motivators as age-old and honored spiritual themes. In order to help craft a spiritual pedagogy to sustain teachers, Chapter 3 turns to the rich tradition of Ignatian spirituality. I hold up the Ignatian tradition as just one example of how the spiritual potential of education can be appropriated by any school and the teachers therein. Chapter 4 proposes five dynamic and overlapping configurations of a spiritual pedagogy. The idea is that when certain spiritual commitments in the form of these five configurations become operative for educators, they cannot but become realized in their teaching. Chapter 5 names and describes some general practices that can support the five configurations of a spiritual pedagogy. It follows with some specific suggestions, first for the teacher, and finally for the leadership of the school community.

CONTENTS

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Chapter 1: Sustaining Teachers

"In the old days, we confiscated cigarettes . . . Now it's knives and crack cocaine. And they call it progress."
(Zoe Heller, from *Notes on a Scandal*)

1. The world of teaching

Four months after his election in May 2007, President of France Nicolas Sarkozy wrote an open letter to French educators outlining his views and priorities. In it he unequivocally stated that he plans to prioritize the enhancement of the status of the teaching profession throughout his term of office, because it is so integrally linked to the success of education and the well being of the nation. Sarkozy acknowledged the primordial importance of the teacher's role and "how demanding the marvellous career of a teacher is, how it forces you to give a lot of yourself, also how difficult and sometimes unrewarding it has become since violence entered schools."[1]

Sarkozy may have been addressing a French audience, but his words and sentiment find echo across many Western democracies, not least the United States of America. Teaching has become a difficult profession, far beyond its inherent challenges. The problems of a society tend to be reflected in its schools; the school operates as a microcosm of society. In effect, teaching has become a demanding, often hazardous, and sometimes soul-destroying occupation. A recent Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report identifies problems such as image and profile of the job, public confidence in and affirmation of teachers' work, the quality of pre-service teacher education, the opportunities for continuing professional development, for

[1] Nicolas Sarkozy, "A Letter to Educators: President Sarkozy Writes to French Teachers and Parents Http://Www.Ambafrance-Us.Org/News/Statmnts/2007/Sarkozy_Writes_Educators090407.Asp," (Paris: September 4, 2007 Last retrieved Nov 6th 2007).

partnership and input to policy, the conditions of work, opportunities for diversification, worker-friendly leave arrangements, modes of teacher appointment, security of tenure, and supports in times of difficulty.

The report also admits further difficulties and problems among which are teachers' views that salaries are inadequate, the lack of teacher induction systems, the unsatisfactory condition of some school buildings, inadequate investment in teaching resources and equipment, high pupil teacher ratios, and the stress levels in some teaching contexts. Another problem, emerging from the policy of pupil integration, is the training of classroom teachers as well as learning support assistants for pupils with disabilities.[2] When these factors are appraised, they reflect a complex, changing, and challenging world of teaching.

The OECD report goes on to predict that a much larger number of teachers will enter the profession in the next 5-10 years than in the past 20 years.[3] New teachers with up-to-date skills and fresh ideas have the potential to substantially renew the schools, but will they be sustained in the profession of teaching and find it satisfying? All of this presents an opportunity to open up the conversation about teachers, teaching, and the education process in our postmodern society. In what follows I will attempt to do that, focusing particularly on the person of the teacher and what it means to be a teacher in US schools today. I begin by describing the reality of life for teachers, with a focus on conflicting expectations, emotional demands, how the understanding of the teacher's role has changed particularly with the advent of standardized testing, and the tenacious

[2] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), *Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers* (OECD, 2005). The OECD is a forum where the governments of 30 democracies including the United States work together to address the economic, social and environmental challenges of globalization. This dissertation will focus on the US situation.
[3] Ibid.

problem of teacher attrition. In the second part of this chapter I explore what keeps teachers going in the face of these challenges. I conclude by assessing the implications of these motivations in light of the lived reality for teachers.

1.1 The reality of life for teachers

To anyone who has spent time as a pupil in a classroom, teaching can sometimes appear as a straightforward and predictable occupation. However, as many teacher educators insist, this perception is very far from the reality. Mary Kennedy lifts up three "basic truths" of the reality of life for teachers. First, teachers' practices reflect their concerns about six different things:

a) Covering desirable content;

b) Fostering student learning;

c) Increasing students' willingness to participate;

d) Maintaining lesson momentum;

e) Creating a civil classroom community; and

f) Attending to their own emotional and cognitive needs.

At any given moment, one of these areas requires more attention than the others and teachers are constantly engaged in trade-offs. Every teacher needs to develop an approach that acknowledges all six areas of concern and maximizes success while minimizing problems in each area.

Another 'basic truth', according to Kennedy, is the inconsistency of society's lofty aims for education. She points to the tension between societal desires to accommodate individual needs and to treat all students equally. In addition, there is a tension between the desire to follow students' interests and to ensure that required

content is covered. These ideals are often embraced by teachers so that their personal goals for teaching are numerous and contradictory.

Finally, teachers must quickly and competently generate many multidimensional solutions as events unfold in the classroom. Thus teaching requires simultaneous consideration of at least six different areas of concern, grapples with inherently contradictory ideals, and happens in real time when the benefits and drawbacks of alternative courses of action must be weighed in the moment. This, Kennedy asserts, is the nature of teaching.[4]

Kennedy is not alone in describing the complex and often contradictory world of teaching. Andy Hargreaves describes society's expectations that teachers will be at once catalysts and counterpoints to the knowledge economy. In other words, teachers must be able to cultivate the qualities such as creativity and ingenuity that feed the knowledge economy while at the same time fostering the compassion and sense of worldwide community to deal with its destructive effects.[5] It is interesting that for Hargreaves, the characteristics teachers need in order to effectively face this tension relate more to the persons they must become, rather than technical skills they need to obtain. Whether catalyst or counterpoint, teachers need, for example, to commit to continuous personal and professional development, work and learn collaboratively with colleagues, learn to trust in processes and people, and value educational partners who are distant and different. Reaching this stage of personal and professional development is, according to

[4] Mary M. Kennedy, "Knowledge and Vision in Teaching," *Journal of Teacher Education* 57, no. 3 (June 2006).

[5] Hargreaves asserts that as the child of capitalism, the knowledge economy both stimulates growth and prosperity but also strains and fragments the social order by its relentless pursuit of profit and self interest. Andy Hargreaves, *Teaching in the Knowledge Society: Education in the Age of Insecurity* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2003).

Hargreaves, a matter of personal growth, not formal learning. However, he warns that because of its inherent nature, teaching can have serious effect on teachers' work and relationships, leading to decreasing morale or a sense of professional disillusionment.

1.2 The emotional demands of teaching

Some teacher educators build on Arlie Hochschild's idea of 'emotional labor' to describe the demands of teaching. In the early 1980s, Hochschild framed the demands faced by people working in emotionally demanding work contexts as "emotional labor"; he described it as the hard work of negotiating one's own emotional life to align with the emotions expected and approved of within their profession. Hargreaves explains it as follows: "Funeral directors must be solicitous. Debt collectors need to sound irritated . . . In teaching, optimism, enthusiasm, and a caring disposition are called for every day."[6] But he warns that the conditions of their work frequently make emotional labor unachievable for teachers. For instance, the pressure of teaching to raise standardized test scores amidst overwhelming extraneous tasks saps energy, decreases morale, and prevails against quality classroom and collegial relationships. In addition, teachers are called to go beyond the emotional labor of teaching to develop emotional intelligence and understanding in their students.

Sam Intrator augments the works of Hochschild and Hargreaves to describe the 'emotional drama' of teaching. He lifts up what he calls 'an essential principle' of teaching: When teachers are present to students, they are not merely enacting a curriculum or behaving according to prescribed protocols; they are persons with an emotional makeup and way of being that irretrievably shape how others will experience

[6] Ibid., 80.

them.[7] Sometimes the intensity of emotions takes over and hinders the capacity to be attuned to the emotional register of the classroom. Intrator believes that we need to find ways for beginning teachers especially to make sense of what is going on inside of them by providing time, structure, and approaches that invite intentional focus on how the inner landscapes of their lives "interact with the dense, tangled, and charged work of teaching."[8] Although understanding and negotiating the intense emotionality of teaching is a primary dimension of beginning to teach, Intrator's comments are relevant not only to beginners, but to all teachers.

1.3 Limited understanding of the teacher's role

Standardized testing has also placed additional demands on teaching and may also contribute to a limited understanding of the teacher's role, unless set within a more holistic understanding of education. For example, a recent review describes how "both intuition and research tell us that the achievement of schoolchildren depends substantially on the teachers they are assigned."[9] This review is interesting on three levels. First, it describes "teacher characteristics" in terms of

- college ratings (i.e. ratings of teachers' undergraduate institutions);
- test scores (i.e. teacher licensure examination scores, verbal skills, and other test score measures such as college entrance exam test scores);

[7] Sam M. Intrator, "Beginning Teachers and the Emotional Drama of the Classroom," *Journal of Teacher Education* 57, no. 3 (June 2006): 235.
[8] Ibid.: 236.
[9] Andrew J. Wayne and P. Youngs, "Teacher Characteristics and Student Achievement Gains: A Review," *Review of Educational Research* 73, no. 1 (2003): 89.

- particular degrees and coursework (e.g. teachers with master's degrees, subject related education degrees such as degree in mathematics education compared to simply courses taken in mathematics); and,
- certification status (for the subject taught).

Next, it rates student achievement solely in terms of their standardized test scores. The authors note the importance of considering other student outcomes such as graduation rates, attendance at postsecondary institutions, and the acquisition of knowledge and skills not easily measured by standardized tests, but give no indication of the type of knowledge or skills to which they are refer.

Finally, in delineating what teacher characteristics the review omits, the authors only refer to teacher experience, race, and degrees in education.[10] In short, teacher characteristics are understood in terms of their qualifications, academic history, licensing status, with a half-hearted nod to race and teaching experience. No mention is made of interpersonal skills, feeling for the subject, ability to communicate, capacity to relate with students and colleagues, motivations, life experience, or the host of other human traits that combine and integrate to make a great teacher, (or indeed clash and disjoint to render the opposite). This limited understanding of what makes a good and effective teacher is unsettling. It points not only to an inadequate anthropology, but to the acceptance of such by at least some in the teacher education community. Moreover, it flies in the face of the OECD report which states that there are many important teacher characteristics that are not captured by indicators such as qualifications, experience, and tests of

[10] i.e. degrees in education rather than degrees in particular subjects or the teaching of particular subjects. The authors explain how studies have not explicitly distinguished between degrees in subjects and degrees in the teaching of particular subjects, nor between degrees in the teaching of particular subjects and general degrees in teaching or education.

academic ability. Although difficult to measure, they are vital to student learning and need to be more prominent in teacher formation.[11]

1.4 The problem of teacher turnover and attrition[12]

The problem of teacher attrition and retention has been identified as a major concern in the United States today.[13] Teacher turnover is numerically a sizeable phenomenon; from 1999 to 2001 for instance, about 23% of new public school teachers (those with less than three years of teaching experience) left their teaching jobs.[14] Richard Ingersoll's 2001 study found that the rate of turnover of teachers appears to be higher than in other similar occupations such as nursing.[15] Johnson and Birkland's findings are similar; they report the likelihood that one in five new teachers will leave the profession within three years of entry.[16] Of course, this phenomenon is not particular to public schools; for instance Walter Przygocki has found that Catholic schools face the same problem.[17]

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[11] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 27.

[12] "Turnover" refers to those teachers who leave their current teaching jobs, including those who move to other schools. "Attrition" refers to those teachers who leave the profession altogether. Attrition is a subset of turnover.

[13] This is a concern in a number of countries. The OECD lists three categories of teacher attrition rate; only 3 countries have rates below 3%, the majority of countries (including Ireland) have attrition rates between 3% and 6%, while the United States is one of five countries with attrition rates above 6%. See Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 171.

[14] Ibid., 172.

[15] Richard M. Ingersoll, "Teacher and Teacher Shortages: An Organizational Analysis.," *American Education Research Journal* 38, no. 3 (2001): 513-514.

[16] Susan Moore Johnson and Sarah E. Birkland, "Pursuing a "Sense of Success": New Teachers Explain Their Career Decisions," *American Education Research Journal* 40, no. 3 (2003): 581.

[17] A recent study reports that superintendents and principals in Catholic schools cite finding and retaining high quality teachers as their most difficult challenge. Pointing to one study which found that approximately 25% of new teachers leave the profession after only 1 year and 50% after 5 years, Przygocki asserts that in general teaching is hounded by an attrition rate which surpasses all normal expectations. See Walter F. Przygocki, "Teacher Retention in Catholic Schools," *Catholic Education* 8, no. 1 (June 2004): 523.

National groups also report this phenomenon. For instance, a 2007 National Commission on Teaching & America's Future (NCTAF) report shows that an inordinate amount of capital – both human and financial

> is consumed by the constant process of hiring and replacing beginning teachers who leave before they have mastered the ability to create a successful learning culture for their students. Student achievement suffers, but high turnover schools are also extremely costly to operate. Trapped in a chronic cycle of teacher hiring and replacement these schools drain their districts of precious dollars that could be better spent to improve teaching quality and student achievement.[18]

Przygocki holds up another significant cost of seeking and replacing staff; the premature exit of personnel depletes an organization of the opportunity to imprint culture and develop a cadre of skilled professionals.[19]

Although different schools display different turnover characteristics, the phenomenon of high teacher turnover is not particular to any one type of school. However, despite these differences, what is noteworthy is the amount of similarity in the results across different types of schools. Recruiting more teachers will not solve staffing difficulties if large numbers of such teachers then leave the profession.[20]

Teachers give a myriad of reasons for their decisions to leave the teaching profession. The OECD report investigated the reasons given by both new and more experienced teachers for leaving the profession in the United States. Career-related factors such as "to pursue another career," "better salary or benefits" and further study are rated as top reasons for leaving for both groups. Personal circumstances such as

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[18] Gary Barnes, Edward Crowe, and Benjamin Schaefer, *The Cost of Teacher Turnover in Five School Districts: Executive Summary* (Washington DC: National Commission on Teaching & America's Future (NCTA), 2007), 2.
[19] Przygocki: 526.
[20] Richard Ingersoll, "The Teacher Shortage: A Case of Wrong Diagnosis and Wrong Prescription," *The NASSP Bulletin*, no. 86 (2002).

"pregnancy or child rearing" emerge as the second most cited reason.[21] In this project, however, I focus on retaining factors that are somewhat more nebulous and hard to measure such as personal qualities and motivations of teachers, along with the support and care schools can give them.

2. What keeps teachers going? [22]

In his extensive review of Catholic schools, Timothy Cook asserts that "the quality of a school is only as good as the quality of its teachers."[23] For Walter Przygocki, teachers are the heart and soul of all good schools, especially those who see their work as more than a job.[24] But what keeps teachers alive and enthusiastic within the profession; what keeps good teachers in the classroom? It was Plato's contention that people will care for, and do well at, work that they love. This section explores what keeps teachers going. It reviews the writings of contemporary teacher educators such as Andy Hargreaves, Sonia Nieto, and Susan Moore-Johnson to highlight what the teacher education community itself sees as sustaining and motivating forces for teachers. As a result of this excavation, two themes emerge – the desire to serve and relationality (in the sense of respectful and caring mutual relationships).[25] Both categories appear to be central to teachers' self-understanding. For example, Jeannie Oakes and her colleagues

[21] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 179.
[22] The rather significant body of educational research on the quality of the principal indicates that a good principal can also make a world of difference to the ethos of a school. However, this paper focuses on teachers; the latter part of chapter 5 deals with how school leaders can support them.
[23] Cook: 57.
[24] Przygocki: 532.
[25] Although these two themes serve as powerful motivators, it is important to note that they are not the only factors that influence a person's decision to enter teaching. For example, in his seminal study of schoolteachers, sociologist Dan Lortie found intellectual interests and abilities such as love of subject and enjoyment of learning another but less prevalent factor in what he calls 'the subjective warrant' to teach. See Dan C. Lortie, *Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), chapter two.

in their review of the effects of reforms in the 1980s and 1990s, found that values, social justice, and caring are central concerns and commitments of teachers.[26]

2.1 Desire to serve and relationality

Johnson & Birkland's review of the literature points to the longtime precarious standing of teaching in the United States, and concludes that from the public's perspective, teaching is not highly esteemed work. Relative to other occupations, teachers' pay has improved little in the last 30 years. However, they found that teachers do not enter the profession with naïve salary expectations: "although entrants to teaching do not think that they will be handsomely compensated for their work, they do expect the intrinsic rewards that teaching promises."[27] Further, teachers express measured expectations for achieving success with their students. In other words, teachers' expectations are not unrealistic; indeed we can conclude they reflect what Thomas Groome has called a "realistic optimism."[28] It is hardly surprising then that intrinsic goods more than external rewards are what sustain teachers in their work.

In 1975 Dan Lortie published his seminal work *Schoolteacher, A Sociological Study*. Both the desire to serve and relationality are primary among the five indicators he identified of a candidate's motivation to enter the teaching profession. From participants' responses such as "likes to work with people" or "enjoys working with children", Lortie found ample evidence of what he terms "the interpersonal theme". There are many professions that do not require this theme, so for Lortie, it becomes a distinguishing feature of teaching. In addition, he lifts up the theme of service. Many would-be-

[26] Cited in Hargreaves, 59.
[27] Moore Johnson and Birkland: 584.
[28] Thomas H. Groome, *Educating for Life: A Spiritual Vision for Every Teacher and Parent* (Allen, Texas: T.More, 1998).

teachers see teaching as an opportunity to render important service and as a valuable contribution to society, something of moral worth. However, he cautions that this understanding is not universal and is more likely to pertain to people who approve of prevailing practice than to those who are critical of it. Lortie drew the theme of service from responses such as "helping others" or a 'calling to serve society". This theme is not exclusive to teaching; Lortie tells us that it is repeated for other so-called caring professions.[29]

> Lortie's study reports that
>
> the degree to which teachers are committed and satisfied greatly impacts student learning and overall school effectiveness. Furthermore, teacher commitment and satisfaction are very much linked to teacher motivation and, ultimately, to teacher attrition.[30]

For Lortie, loyalty, identity, and involvement are the characteristics of commitment, and community builds commitment. Determinants of job satisfaction include teacher perception of doing important and meaningful work, professional growth and sense of service. Commitment and satisfaction are related; teachers who are committed to mission tend to be significantly more satisfied with their jobs.[31]

It is interesting to note how the participants in Lortie's study assessed the personal qualities they believed suited them to teaching: 25% made statements of personal preference (e.g. I wanted to work with children); over 50% referred to interpersonal capacities and dispositions (e.g. patience, calmness, sense of humor, leadership ability), and less than 20% made allusions to intellectual interests and abilities (e.g. knowledge of

[29] Lortie, chapter 2.
[30] Ibid., 67.
[31] Ibid., 68.

a subject, enjoying learning).[32] In other words, more than half prioritized abilities and qualities that favored the making and maintaining of good relationships. Lortie reports that for teachers themselves, the outstanding teacher "induced learning and love of learning and elicited positive feelings and high effort while maintaining discipline"; this resonates with the multiple concerns of teachers outlined by Kennedy in an earlier section. [33]

2.1 (a) Making a difference: Teaching as the desire to serve

This theme relates to the reasons why people decide to become teachers, and their vision of education and the teacher's role within that scheme. These reasons may include a wish to transform society's fundamental inequities, to work for social justice, to 'make a difference'. I use the term 'desire to serve' to include a valid self-interest – the felt need for worthwhile work, for a fulfilling career, to do something meaningful with one's life. The desire to be of service to one's neighbor, to help other people is a powerful force in choice of career. For instance, a recent longitudinal study of the literature on strategies that promote the recruitment and retention of teachers reports that "an altruistic desire to serve society is one of the primary motivations for pursuing teaching."[34]

The theme of desire to serve considers the meaning that teachers attach to their work - it seems that teachers do well in schools where the values and meaning they attach to their work can be reflected in their praxis and are upheld in the school ethos. Sonia Nieto reminds us that teachers do not leave their values at the door when they enter the

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[32] Ibid., 39-40.
[33] Ibid., 118.
[34] Cassandra M. Guarino, Lucrecia Santibanez, and Glenn A. Daley, "Teacher Recruitment and Retention: A Review of the Recent Empirical Literature.," *Review of Educational Research* 76, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 183.

classroom. Moreover, Nieto's study suggests that many teachers feel the call to social justice as a primary motivating factor both in the decision to enter teaching and as an intrinsic part of their lives.[35] Marilyn Cochran Smith writes that many people want to become teachers because they want to make a difference, to change the world. She concludes that the passion of this kind of commitment reflects the assumption that it is impossible to teach in ways that are not ideological and value-laden. For Cochran Smith, "commitments like these cannot be forced, and they cannot be bought. But they can be informed, nurtured, and channeled into productive work in schools and communities."[36]

This theme of making a difference resonates with the emphasis today that sees teaching as a work of social justice; as a real way to try to equalize opportunities for every child regardless of race, gender, or socio-economic background, among other variables. We always take a position, even by our indifference. Justice requires that we affirm what people reasonably need in order to live their lives as full human persons and to grow toward fulfillment with human dignity. Because teaching really is about service and deep-seated commitment, Cochran Smith asserts "[it] cannot be reduced simply to the bottom lines of efficiency and profitability. At their very core, teaching and learning are matters of both head and heart, both reason and passion."[37]

But the call and response to justice can be a double edged sword. Teachers cannot ignore the social problems they meet such as poverty or systematic discrimination, but they cannot single-handedly solve them either. Moreover, that is not the role of teachers. As Intrator points out, turbulence of emotions is inevitable for teachers; finding

[35] Sonia Nieto, *What Keeps Teachers Going?* (New York & London: Teachers College Press, 2003).
[36] Marilyn Cochran Smith, *Policy, Practice, and Politics in Teacher Education* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2006), 101.
[37] Ibid., 104.

equilibrium between the impulse to serve and the ethic of self care is a complex task that can be supported by, among other elements, a positive school community.

In their study of 50 first and second year teachers in Massachusetts, Johnson & Birkland found that

> in deciding whether to stay in their schools, transfer to new schools, or leave public school teaching, the teachers weighed, more than anything else, whether they could be effective with their students. They described the many ways in which the working conditions in their schools - teaching assignments, collegial interaction, curriculum, administration, discipline – either supported or stymied them in that search for success.[38]

It is noteworthy that of the six participants whose stories are profiled in this study, at least two speak of the wish to make a difference in their community as a major motivation to enter the profession.[39]

Cochran Smith concludes that although many teachers enter for idealistic reasons, these are not enough to sustain them over the long haul. But given the problem of teacher turnover, if this idealism is dashed at an early stage, particularly in the first few years of teaching, can a teacher be sustained even over the short haul? Hargreaves sees shattered ideals as a major threat to teacher retention. Moreover, intentions to leave the profession early devastate the bonds with work and colleagues. He bemoans the exodus from teaching, among both younger and older teachers, in many cases because of "lost professional integrity, where an honorable teaching mission was usurped by economic imperatives and political power."[40] The result is that the profession will find it harder and harder to attract high-quality candidates with intellect and ingenuity.

[38] Moore Johnson and Birkland: 583.
[39] Ibid.: 596, 600.
[40] Hargreaves, 122.

The desire to serve is not a new motivation for teachers. Goodlad's research of 1984 found that most public school teachers show characteristics of altruism and idealism, and "the belief that teaching is a noble and worthy profession and the sincere desire to be of service to others continue to be important motivators" in this choice process.[41] However, the marked difference is his findings that most public school teachers would again choose teaching as a career; this stands in sharp contrast to the reality of attrition from the profession today.

For Andy Hargreaves the ideal of service needs to be articulated and handed on; our schools need to prepare young people not only for the private good which the economy serves, but the public good it encompasses. Hargreaves advocates for teachers who reach beyond the technical tasks of producing acceptable test results to teaching as a life-shaping, world-changing social mission – teachers as society's most respected intellectuals.[42] However, he stops short of describing how we equip our teachers to meet these expectations.

2.1 (b) Caring and connecting: Teaching as relationality.

The second emergent theme from current teacher education literature recognizes that good relationships with students and colleagues not only support the learning environment, but can sustain the teacher by means of a personal, positive dynamic that transcends the classroom and even the schooling institution. In a profession where feedback of any type can be scant and unreliable, the fulfillment from relationships can provide that missing factor and feed intrinsic motivation. However, we need to acknowledge that some teachers form very negative relationships with their students,

[41] See Przygocki: 533.
[42] Hargreaves, 1-5.

relationships that have a destructive rather than a sustaining effect. For example, teachers who see themselves as an unquestionable authority or who use power over students rather than power with them, and teachers who need to be pleased or who depend on their students for their sense of self. All these constitute the aspects of relationships which dominate rather than liberate, smother rather than generate life.

One of the highest joys of a teacher is to have a student "soar beyond the teacher's accomplishments. The small teacher would strive to dominate and undermine the achievements of a student to keep the student perpetually subservient."[43] Few would condone Gradgrind's image of teaching as filling empty vessels,[44] but it would be a mistake to simply assume it has been supplanted by fully appropriate metaphors.

Andy Hargreaves writes about the effects of relational fragmentation on education. For him, the knowledge society, like the world of entertainment, is one in which fleeting images and messages, instant pleasure and minimal thought demand the ability to react rather than relate.[45] The endless change and mobility demands of knowledge society organizations fragment connections, yet institutions such as schools must be underpinned by secure relationships. Hargreaves fears that teachers are coerced into feeding the insatiable needs of the knowledge society and are left with little time and energy to reflect on what it is they are really about as educators. He contends that as persons and as educators, the primary challenge for teachers is to expand the circle of

[43] Daniel R. Vertrees, *Education as Spiritual Enterprise: Essays on Moral Discernment* (Montgomery: Court Street Press, 2004), 107.
[44] See Charles Dickens, *Hard Times*.
[45] Hargreaves, 38.

trust outside the immediate family; to form networks, forge relationships, and contribute to as well as draw on the human resources of the community and wider society.[46]

For Nel Noddings, no worthwhile education can occur outside of caring relations: "Subject matter cannot carry itself. Relation, except in very rare cases, precedes any engagement with subject matter."[47] There is little need for teachers awash with information but lacking the sound moral judgment that any thoughtful, responsible adult should be able to contribute. Her ideal is teachers serving as a modern-day council of elders, educated in wisdom. She advocates a role for teachers as advisors to students in their care "about honesty, compassion, open-mindedness, nonviolence, consideration, moderation, and a host of other qualities that most of us admire. This talk need not be indoctrination any more than mathematics teaching need be lecture and rote learning."[48] Close relationships are the beginning and one of the significant ends of healthy living. Children only develop the capacity to care in supportive environments where they learn how to respond to dependable caring. Whether their caring focuses exclusively on self or expands to the people around them depends in part on the adults who guide and serve as models.[49]

Relationality is also a core theme of Sonia Nieto's inquiry project *What Keeps Teachers Going in Spite of Everything?* This project was conducted to explore what helps good teachers persevere, in spite of the deprivations and challenges of public schools. Nieto asserts that 'teaching involves trust and respect as well as close, special

[46] Ibid.
[47] Nell Noddings, *The Challenge to Care in Schools: An Alternative Approach to Education*, 2nd ed. (New York: Teachers College Press, 2005), 36.
[48] Ibid., 39.
[49] Ibid., 52.

relationships between students and teachers."[50] A key finding in Nieto's research is that quality relationships, not just with students but also with their families and parents, keep people going as teachers. This finding is supported by Susan Moore Johnson and the Project on the Next Generation of Teachers. As with Nieto's project, relationality figures prominently in the results. It is interesting that most participants in Johnson's study were hesitant to commit long-term to classroom teaching – describing themselves more as short-term explorers and contributors. A number of teachers transferred from urban to suburban schools. However, these participants were in search not of wealthier students but of more supportive work environments. In short, Johnson found that the quality of new teachers' interactions with their colleagues is a major factor in their success as teachers and their decisions whether or not to stay in teaching.

Marilyn Cochran Smith asserts that it is now generally accepted that teaching and learning are social and relational processes – they depend to a large extent on the establishment of relationships between teachers and their students. She points to documented accounts which show that caring relationships figure prominently for successful teachers of underserved students. She traces this ethic of caring and of accountability to deep beliefs about the importance and value of the life chances of all children, the morality of teaching, and the future of the nation. For Cochran-Smith "Teaching involves caring deeply about students as human beings and, at the same time, caring just as deeply that all students have rich opportunities to learn academically challenging material that will maximize their life chances."[51]

[50] Nieto, *What Keeps Teachers Going?* 37.
[51] Cochran Smith, 100.

Guarino et al found that although working conditions and salaries are elements of the overall compensation derived from teaching, schools that provided mentoring and induction programs, particularly those related to collegial support, had lower rates of turnover among beginning teachers.[52] This finding is echoed by Johnson & Birkland who remind us that teaching by its nature is unpredictable work. "One of the greatest sources of uncertainty for teachers is whether they will be able to connect with students and build productive relationships."[53] In their study of teacher turnover, they identified two sub-groups of movers (those that left a teaching position for one in a different school): Involuntary movers left a particular school because they were forced out, for instance because of school closure. Voluntary movers, on the other hand, chose to leave one school in favor of another. Johnson & Birkland found that voluntary movers left schools where teachers worked in isolation and where new teachers were left to sink or swim. They departed schools where "student disrespect and disruption were taken for granted as inevitable and moved to schools that had well-established norms of respect, effective discipline systems, and deliberate approaches to parental involvement."[54] Teachers favored schools that offered organized support for novices and schoolwide collegial interaction. Several teachers observed that parental engagement in their children's education and the life of the school increased the likelihood that teachers could be more effective.[55] In short, Johnson & Birkland report that although participants' prior career paths, financial situations, and preparation played a role in their career decisions, teachers

[52] Guarino, Santibanez, and Daley, "Teacher Recruitment and Retention: A Review of the Recent Empirical Literature.," 199.
[53] Moore Johnson and Birkland: 584.
[54] Ibid.: 598.
[55] Ibid.: 603.

who felt successful with students and supported in their teaching were more likely to stay in schools and in teaching than teachers who did not.[56]

3. Implications

The final section of chapter 1 looks at the implications of the powerful motivating themes of desire to serve and relationality in light of the lived reality for teachers working in US schools today.

3.1 Who cares for the carers?

Frequently in the analyses of teaching relationships, teachers are posited as "carers" of students, the constant givers of care to those in their charge. For Noddings, positive relationality with others presupposes a grounding of care. She unpacks the notion of a caring relation in its most basic form as a connection or encounter between two human beings – "a carer and a recipient of care, or cared-for."[57] These labels are not permanent, because mature relationships require mutuality. However, the reality of teaching does not often reflect this mutuality; the teacher is expected to act as permanent care giver, with the student always as recipient. Of course with younger children this is to be expected; the very nature of schools presumes a maturity on the part of the adult community that is not and cannot for developmental reasons be part of either children's or adolescents' mode of behaving and relating. On the other hand, as students approach young adulthood, the model of teacher as permanent care giver serves neither party – teachers become burdened and burnt-out, and students remain forever dependent or worse, unpracticed at giving, with a sense of entitled receiving of care.

[56] Ibid.: 581.
[57] Noddings, *The Challenge to Care in Schools: An Alternative Approach to Education*, 15.

Teachers too are in need of care. I am not suggesting that the solution is students starting to care more for their teachers, but that the educational system and school commitments recognize and provide the care that teachers need. A recent longitudinal study found that schools that provided mentoring and induction programs, particularly those related to collegial support, had lower rates of turnover among beginning teachers.[58] These findings suggest that teachers cannot be left holding one end of a caring relationship without a matrix of systemic support.

In many ways this one-sided understanding of the role of the teacher is understandable in light of the themes of desire to serve and relationality identified above. However, when a teacher enters the profession with the ideal of service or to create caring environments for children, the risk to the teacher's own resources is high unless they find themselves in an environment that cares for and sustains them. Healthy relationships cannot remain one-sided, and the question "who cares for the carers" is urgent. Human beings are creatures of limited resources and cannot give what they do not have. Both Nieto and Cochran Smith, like many other teacher educators, stop short of analyzing this crucial aspect of teaching.

I have noted Nieto's finding that for educators to be effective, they need to confront tough questions about their identities and motivations; to think about why they do what they do and ask if there is a better way. Simply implementing the latest strategy will not keep teachers engaged or effective. Irish educator David Tuohy asserts that new curricula require skills of students which are far from compliant. He adds that an adequate response to the realities of students' lives means that pastoral care is required as

[58] Guarino, Santibanez, and Daley, "Teacher Recruitment and Retention: A Review of the Recent Empirical Literature."

an integral part of all subjects. Therefore, "reflection on and support for good interpersonal relationships is a key element of inservice planning."[59] Again, although he makes a reasonable argument, Tuohy's accent is on catering for students' needs. I argue that the needs of teachers are also a legitimate pedagogical concern, one in need of significant attention.

Noddings goes further than most in addressing the needs of teachers and the responsibility to prepare teachers well and offer lifelong development in the ability to meet their own needs so that they can meet the needs of their students. For instance, Noddings advocates that "teachers, like students need a broad curriculum closely connected to the existential heart of life and to their own special interests [so they can] provide an intelligent approach to the legitimate needs and questions of students."[60] For Noddings, we empower students by empowering teachers; we start by providing them with an integrated form of education, not a highly specialized concentration in one discipline.

Even Noddings, however, avoids the topic of how to address the complex and conflicting demands that stretch past professional expertise and reach into the deepest part of the teacher to enable then to offer the support she expects on an ongoing basis. For Noddings, a teacher must be both sufficiently expert and willing "to discuss matters on which they have had no specific training – all the matters pertaining to human existence – and help students to create and learn powerful methods of investigation."[61] This is a tall order when one considers the lived reality of teachers described earlier in this chapter.

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[59] David Tuohy, *The Inner World of Teaching: Exploring Assumptions* (London: Falmer Press, 1999), 152.
[60] Noddings, *The Challenge to Care in Schools: An Alternative Approach to Education*, 177.
[61] Ibid., 178.

3.2 The person of the teacher

Tuohy writes how teachers have taken on more and more roles and burdens, while shedding few of the older ones. Teachers are frequently 'batch-processed' through inservice courses, where the focus is on delivering the curriculum with in-built quality control; an approach that does little to develop individual teacher talent. For Tuohy, "the lack of focus on the development of teacher as person seems regrettable."[62] Hargreaves agrees, pointing to the trend of subjecting teachers to mandated and usually inadequate in-service training on government priorities rather than experiencing continuous professional learning and development. For Hargreaves, this approach runs the risk of stunting emotional development. What is needed, he asserts, is the higher level of emotional understanding.[63] However, Hargreaves, like most teacher educators, stops short of discussing a holistic approach to teacher preparation, induction, and support to provide the higher level of emotional understanding that he advocates.

Finally, the communal aspect of healthy living is often a casualty of teaching. Tuohy points to the community dimension as a central concern of every person. We are social beings and interaction with people we can relate to on our own level is a crucial part of every day life. However, because so much of their work is classroom focused, this concern is often forgotten for teachers. This has clear implications for school structures. We cannot expect teachers to talk to each other about their own growth as well as that of students, and to offer each other moral support, academic help, and solid friendship if we deny them the time and space to construct good collegial relationships in the first place.

[62] Tuohy, 153.
[63] Hargreaves, 80.

Conclusion

The nature of teaching is complex and unpredictable; the lived reality of teachers is only slowly being recognized. Teacher educators are struggling to provide an adequate framework to analyze this issue. I have identified two central themes from the literature of teacher education that motivate people to join the profession: teaching as the desire to serve and teaching as relationality. But I have also found that although alluded to in the writings of some teacher educators, and explicitly discussed by a few, there is no framework for discussing these themes in the conversation on teacher preparation, induction, and support in schools. In other words, my analysis suggests the necessity of a new way of looking at the lived reality of teachers. The desire to serve and relationality are matters of the human spirit, and sustaining them calls for nurturing the 'spirit' of teachers – their souls – for a spirituality of teaching.

Cochran Smith asserts that as well as a social and relational process, teaching is already politicized and this is inherent to any system of education. I contend that it is also true that teaching is a human activity and as a function of all things human, it is inevitably spiritual. Spirituality is inherent to every teaching encounter. Nieto found that the intrinsic call of teaching emanates from personal identity and integrity. Borrowing from educator Linda Gibson, Nieto describes teaching as "an encounter with the self" and concludes that facing our autobiographies honestly is one way we can begin to focus on how to make more mutually affirming relationships. Valuing one's own self is a spiritual gift; it involves acceptance, being in right relationship with oneself. Autobiography and honest reflection, without praise or blame, are well known practices in the world of spiritual discernment. I return to a discussion of these practices in a later chapter.

The starting point for re-visioning the profession is the person of the teacher as a spiritual being. Referring to the problems of 'the teaching profession' is an abstraction of the issue at stake. Any profession is only as good, happy and effective as the people in it. This position seeks to understand teachers as persons, with their own cares, joys, and worries. It sees the teacher as a valued colleague, and contributor to the life and atmosphere of the school outside the classroom. Teachers are first and foremost persons, and spirituality must be acknowledged as an essential element of the person of the teacher. By acknowledging and nurturing the intrinsic spirituality of the teacher, we open up possibilities of teachers growing in fulfillment in their personal and professional lives. This can only be good news for teachers, learners, and their schools. In chapter 2, I propose spirituality as a foundation to re-frame the work of teachers.

Chapter 2: A spiritual foundation for teachers

Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:
Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
Selves – goes itself; *myself* it speaks and spells,
Crying *What I do is me: for that I came.*
(Gerard Manley Hopkins).

Introduction

In response to the issues and themes of chapter 1, this chapter sets forth the claim that teaching is a spiritual activity. The notion of spirituality as a necessary foundation for educators needs to be reclaimed. Parker Palmer insists that rather than subjects or students, we primarily teach who we are – from within – from the standpoint of our own integrity and identity. It is our inner spirit that makes and sustains good teachers.[1] My claim is centered on the assumption that teaching has a spiritual heart and just as a healthy heart is essential to good living, a healthy spirituality can keep teachers enthusiastic and fresh in practice, even after many years. This assumption pivots on an understanding of the human person as essentially spiritual;[2] this spiritual nature of ourselves becomes even more pressing for teachers because they are so involved in the personal formation of others. Education is to engage the spirit of both teacher and learner, enabling them to have a life as well as make a living. Beginning with Plato who described the teacher's task as "turning the soul to the true, the good and the beautiful"[3],

[1] Parker J. Palmer, *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998).
[2] Whereas this anthropology is upheld to some extent by all major spiritual traditions, it has also been underpinned by scientific investigation. A classic instance is the 1960s study conducted by zoologist Alistair Hardy and the Religious Experience Unit at Manchester College in Oxford. Drawing from 4,000 first-hand accounts by adults of significant religious and spiritual experience, Hardy concluded from the evidence that human beings are spiritual by nature and that spirituality is not the exclusive domain of any one religion or even of religion in general. See Andrew Wright, *Spirituality and Education*, ed. John Head and Ruth Merttens, Master Classes in Education (London: RoutledgeFalmer, 2000), 38-39.
[3] See Plato, *The Republic*, trans. R. E. Allen (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 516 B-D.

all the great theorists of education have, in one way or another, pointed to good education as engaging the human spirit.

This understanding is not confined to educators of times long past; for instance Alfred North Whitehead insisted on "the old summary of educational ideal which has been current at any time from the dawn of our civilization. The essence of education is that it be religious."[4] Maria Harris sees teaching as a "religious act, a sacramental act, a holy act . . . a form of spirituality."[5] Thomas Groome asserts "the educational work of teachers and parents is ultimately and essentially spiritual."[6] He insists that the worthiest purpose of education is that it be *for life for all*, enabling the humanity of the learner become fully alive to help create a society that serves the common good. Groome is convinced that spirituality should be the leaven that vitalizes the whole educational enterprise. This spiritual awakening "reflects people's abiding desire for something more than possessions or personal success. It hints at renewed consciousness of the hunger of the human heart that only Transcendence can satisfy."[7] This is true however people name their Higher Power, even for those who do not believe in a personal God.

There is a dynamic, reciprocal process at play in education; when the teacher intentionally sets out to engage the spirit, to make meaning with students on the level of deep desire, then the spirit of the teacher cannot but engage. And what could be more motivating, relationship-building, and confirming of one's vocation than to be part of

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[4] Alfred North Whitehead, *The Aims of Education, and Other Essays.*, 1st Free Press pbk. ed. ed. (New York: Free Press, 1967), 14. For Whitehead, a religious education is one which inculcates duty and reverence. He states that "duty arises from our potential control over the course of events. Where attainable knowledge could have changed the issue, ignorance has the guilt of vice. And the foundation of reverence is this perception, that the present holds within itself the complete sum of existence, backwards and forwards that whole amplitude of time, which is eternity." 14

[5] Maria Harris, *Women and Teaching: Themes for a Spirituality of Pedagogy* (New York: Paulist, 1988), 9.

[6] Groome, *Educating for Life: A Spiritual Vision for Every Teacher and Parent*,16.

[7] Ibid., 323.

such a process?[8] Spirituality is a necessary perspective to view the issues of education, specifically here the person of the teacher. Of course, it is not sufficient simply to acknowledge such a claim; the implications must be addressed. If education is essentially a spiritual enterprise with teachers and learners as spiritual participants, it calls for a spiritual pedagogy.[9] The crafting of such pedagogy – a way of teaching that nurtures and sustains the spirit of both teacher and student - will be the subject of chapter 4.

However, despite instances and authors such as those mentioned above, and although we may intuitively recognize the validity of this claim for spirituality, it is a language that is largely missing from the world of education. On the other hand, when we peel away the surface from some contemporary education research and writings, the hunger for spirituality looms large. Indeed, the two factors unearthed from the teacher education literature in chapter 1 that seem to sustain teachers in their work - those of service and relationality - are both spiritual in essence. Spirituality is rooted in relationality - the concrete connectedness to self and other - and in the commitment to serve others.

Chapter 2 begins by exploring both explicit and implicit evidence of this hunger for a deeper foundation already at play in education. Next I re-frame the themes of teaching as desire to serve and teaching as relationality as age-old and honored spiritual themes and go on to explore the spiritual dimensions of these themes. Finally I lift up

[8] The notion that intrinsic goods as much, if not more than, external rewards sustain teachers in their work resonates with the thinking of philosopher of Alasdair MacIntyre who points to certain practices that bring about internal goods. A spirituality of the teacher focuses on the internal goods of the practice of teaching rather than external rewards. See Alasdair C. MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 2nd ed. (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984).

[9] Although perhaps more descriptively defined as a 'spiritually-inspired pedagogy', I have chosen to use the less cumbersome phrase 'spiritual pedagogy'. It denotes any pedagogy that takes into account the spirituality of participants. Rather than a pedagogy to promote spirituality *per se*, a spiritual pedagogy forms the grounding of all teaching – math, music, football, the entire curriculum both inside and outside the classroom.

the challenges and opportunities presented by contemporary culture to proposing a spiritual pedagogy to sustain the educator.

1. The hunger for spirituality in education

To begin, I offer my working definition of spirituality as *the search and expression of that which is life-giving within a transcendent horizon*. Conversation on spirituality is no longer foreign to the professional world. For instance, within the fields of business[10] and medicine,[11] attention to spirituality of the person is becoming quite prevalent. Spirituality in the work place is not just a fringe activity, a murmuring on the wings; what I propose here is part of a bigger picture. In what follows, I will attempt to uncover evidence of this incipient perspective, often not named as such, beginning to emerge in education.

According to Nel Noddings, possibly the greatest lack in modern public schooling is spirituality. Matters of the spirit are part of every day life and should be addressed wherever they arise; they are part of the quest to integrate the self. It is hard for Noddings to imagine people gaining any real understanding of life without some knowledge of transcendence. She cites Carl Jung who insisted that the "concept of god seems to be embedded in the human psyche, and the longing for spiritual connection is universal."[12] Daniel Vertrees agrees, reminding us that "throughout history people have

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[10] See for instance, Margaret Benefiel, *Soul at Work: Spiritual Leadership in Organizations* (New York: Seabury Books, 2005), Alan Briskin, *The Stirring of Soul in the Workplace* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996), William A. Guillory, *The Living Organizaton: Spirituality in the Workplace* (Salt Lake City: Innovations International Inc., 2000).

[11] See for example, Helen Graham, *Soul Medicine: Returning the Spirit to Healing* (Dublin: Newleaf, 2001), Michael Kearney, *Mortally Wounded: Stories of Soul Pain Death and Healing* (New York: Touchstone, 1996), Thomas G. Plante and Carl E. Thoresen, eds., *Spirit, Science, and Health: How the Spiritual Mind Fuels Physical Wellness* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 2007), Myles N. Sheehan, "A Struggle for the Soul of Medicine," *America*, 5 November 2007.

[12] Noddings, *The Challenge to Care in Schools: An Alternative Approach to Education*,83-84.

taught their young not only pragmatic survival skills but also the spiritual beliefs of their culture."[13]

Noddings lifts up the work done by liberation and feminist theologians in restoring an ancient respect for bodies as enspirited beings. For Noddings, education is for "the integration of body, mind, and spirit."[14] But the spiritual aspect of self is almost ignored in today's public schools. She believes that a dedication to full human growth will not stunt or impede intellectual achievement, and insists that education should produce people who can "live nonviolently with each other, sensitively and in harmony with the natural environment, reflectively and serenely with themselves."[15] Noddings believes that fostering an environment of care in schools will address this deficit. I find her solution a little utopian. First, Noddings' comments focus on children; the omission of how to sustain the care-givers looms large. In addition to taking public responsibility for raising healthy, competent, and happy children it is equally important to sustain healthy, competent, and happy adults. Further, any environment that does not recognize spirituality as an essential aspect of humanity and work in some way to cultivate it shortchanges the wonder of humanity. Care is only one ingredient in the dish that feeds human hunger.

For Thomas Groome, the issue is one of soul – "the animating and defining human principle that is the very life of God in humankind."[16] Good education for Groome is about nourishing soul. John Miller also advocates for the re-unification of soul with education. For Miller, soul is "a deep and vital energy that gives meaning and

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[13] Vertrees,19.
[14] Noddings, *The Challenge to Care in Schools: An Alternative Approach to Education*, 47.
[15] Ibid., 12.
[16] Groome, *Educating for Life: A Spiritual Vision for Every Teacher and Parent*, 325.

direction to our lives."[17] His basic assumption is that the more we nourish our own souls the more our teaching will be reenergized and revitalized. Miller sees a central place for the sacred in education; the separation between the spiritual and secular is false, even dangerous. He agrees with Al Gore that our ecological problems arise from a spiritual poverty; the global environmental crisis is an outer manifestation of a spiritual one.[18] Thus, both Miller and Groome present the nature and purpose of education as something hallowed – a complex, spiritual process that requires ongoing attention to the deepest dimensions of our humanity.

William Ayers holds a similar position. He describes teaching as intellectual and thoughtful work which requires thoughtful, courageous people to carry it forward successfully. Ayers adds that it also requires a leaning inward, traveling toward self-knowledge, a sense of being alive and conscious in the world. Every human being is somehow sacred, with a "vast and wild" inner life. This recognition asks us to reject any action that treats anyone as object, any gesture that *thingifies* other human beings. Classroom management or discipline is never achieved once and for all because we are "incomplete and aware of our incompleteness, on a voyage and on the move. . . We seek the truth; we want to be free."[19]

For Parker Palmer, there is no such thing as a world that does not start with the person; no such thing as a self without a unique point of view.[20] This is something that every teacher must come to terms with. But a focus on the self is not enough; spirituality

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[17] John P. Miller, *Education and the Soul: Toward a Spiritual Curriculum* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 9.
[18] Ibid., 5.
[19] William Ayers, "The Hope and Practice of Teaching," *Journal of Teacher Education* 57, no. 3 (June 2006): 272-273.
[20] Parker J. Palmer, *To Know as We Are Known: Education as a Spiritual Journey* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993), 36.

reflects the person in conscious relationship with what is other, seeking especially the Other which is transcendent. This is the aspect I wish to incorporate into the conversation; the spiritual is the foundation which can further our understanding of teachers and the vocation to teach.

2. Vocation: The spiritual dimensions of the desire to serve

Chapter 1 highlighted the desire to serve, the wish to make a difference, as a significant motivator for teachers. I now highlight the spirituality of this theme and re-name it in the language of vocation.[21] Many professions are grounded in the wish to make a difference. "Physicians want to make a difference in the health quality of their patients; police officers want to make a difference in the safety and lawfulness of the world . . . [teachers] want to ensure that their students have learned enough to fulfill their opportunities in life."[22] Frederick Buechner offers a lovely image of vocation as "the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."[23] I understand Buechner to mean that vocation is fulfilled when our desires are replaced by gladness because we use our gifts and our personhood to address some great human need or

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[21] It is worth noting that the spiritual dimension of the desire to serve can also be expressed in language other than that of vocation or calling. For instance, Vertrees refers to this desire as the 'Moral Imperative'; he sees it as the reason would-be-teachers enter the profession. Indeed, Vertrees goes even further, stating that teachers have an ecumenical calling to reconcile people with the world and with creation. Dissatisfaction on the job occurs when teachers stray from the Moral Imperative, are, or always have been, ungrounded in that Moral Imperative, or have become so distracted that they no longer believe the Moral Imperative possible or true. See Vertrees, 22.

Recently some teacher educators have gone beyond the language of service to preference that of solidarity. For example, Ayers advocates that teachers must become students of their students so that their stance is identification *with*, not identification *of*, their students. The teacher's approach is one of solidarity, rather than service. Hargreaves too challenges what he calls the cliché of 'making a difference' as it is no longer sufficient as a moral purpose for teaching. We must examine what difference, to what end, and for what reasons. See Hargreaves, *Teaching in the Knowledge Society: Education in the Age of Insecurity*, 5.

[22] Vertrees, 21.

[23] Cited in Palmer, *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*, 30. Buechner's definition forms the understanding of vocation for the purpose of this dissertation.

challenge. When we touch the point of universal connection, we go some way toward filling the void within. It is unlikely that we will connect with the inner core of our students if we are disconnected from ourselves or from the world around us.

My treatment of 'vocation' begins with a brief review of the understanding of call and response in the Hebrew Scriptures. I then outline the biblical wisdom we can glean for vocation today.

2.1 Call and response in the Hebrew Scriptures

Although 'call' is a common word in the Hebrew Scriptures, it acquires theological significance when it is God who calls. As a religious concept it has become almost synonymous with divine election. Call in the Hebrew Scriptures is always initiated by God, and generally to people who are reluctant to accept. When we examine the callings of the prophets and their responses, we see how often they cry out, "But I am a child and cannot speak."[24] Despite the implications of the call, people accept because they recognize at some level that it is intrinsic to who they are as persons – "that being indoors each one dwells . . . *myself* it speaks and spells"[25] - because they 'cannot not' do what God is asking of them.

God calls particular people at a particular time and uses them for a particular purpose; thus vocation in the biblical sense is the heartfelt understanding, acceptance, and active agreement to become an instrument of God's work. Those who answer the call become acutely aware of the compassion of God, of the heartfelt concern of God for the world and its "deep hungers." Biblically, every personal call is situated within the

[24] Arthur Katz, *The Spirit of Prophecy: An Examination of the Prophetic Call*, 2nd ed. (Laporte, MN: Burning Bush Publications, 2001), 17.
[25] 'As kingfishers catch fire', in Gerard Manley Hopkins, *Gerard Manley Hopkins: The Major Works (Oxford World's Classics)*, ed. Catherine Phillips (Oxford: University Press, 2002), 129.

broader call to the whole people to renew the Covenant, to remind Israel of its faithful relationship with Yahweh. In order to trace the ancient vocative nature of teaching, I now turn to three of the great teachers of the Hebrew Scriptures.

2.1 (a) Moses

The realization of how one's deep gladness meets the world's deep hunger is birthed in many ways. John Bollan describes three such methods

a) It may be entwined with our earliest memories and instincts – with us from the beginning;
b) The call may creep up on us almost unnoticed;
c) It may be an unwelcome notion; we may turn, run or hide, but it simply remains, throwing stones at the window from outside, refusing to go away.[26]

Moses' experience is an example of how an inkling of one's vocation can lie initially silent, but slowly become louder over time. The call of Moses is not a once-off occurrence. He must spend time in the wilderness before he is ready to even hear, let alone answer, God's call. His sojourn in Midian represents a personal discernment period; he has left the Egyptian establishment but not yet claimed his identity in the Hebrew camp. Moses is not a man of unusual piety, nor does he volunteer to be the liberator of the Hebrews, despite his concern for their oppression. It is not an intention to pray or worship that brings him to the "mountain of God" (Ex 3:1). He stumbles unsuspectingly upon what proves to be a holy place in the course of his ordinary, everyday duties as a shepherd. Many teachers can resonate with this; holding a new qualification does not necessarily mean that teachers are sure of their future, or see

[26] John Bollan, *The Light of His Face: Spirituality for Catholic Teachers* (Dublin: Veritas, 2007), chapter 2.

themselves as full members of the profession. It can take time to grow into the "teacher" in one's identity. Indeed Moses is turned into a man of destiny by the convergence of a concrete, historical task and the new knowledge of God which grasps him.

The episode at Horeb represents the ultimate moment in this huge shift in consciousness. Initially, Moses' attention is caught by a burning bush. Slowly his reaction changes from curiosity to awe as he realizes that he is in the presence of God. Moses, like all teachers, stands on holy ground. The poet Yeats implores "Tread softly because you tread on my dreams."[27] Dealing with the dreams of new generations is indeed something many teachers consider sacred.

Yet Moses is reluctant to accept the call to bring the Israelites out of Egypt and raises a series of objection for which God provides retorts, ranging from assurances of God's help to the appointing of Aaron as Moses' spokesperson. The God of past generations who has announced the intention to be the God of the present generation as well, willingly helps Moses through the discernment process by answering every one of his protests. The series of excuses raised by Moses echo the inner and outer struggles not alone of the prophets of Israel, but of everyone who tries to respond faithfully to the challenge of God's call in their lives.[28]

However, Moses is not alone as he tries to live into his vocation. He meets Aaron in the wilderness and the brothers go then as instructed and gather the elders. Aaron speaks the words Moses received from Yahweh, and the response of the people confirms the assurance that Yahweh had given to Moses. They believe, bow their heads, and worship. This type of confirmation is important for vocation; something that is often

[27] W.B. Yeats, *He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven*(accessed Feb 1st 2008); available from http://www.webwedding.co.uk/articles/men/Speeches/poems/clothsofheaven.htm.
[28] Brevard S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974), 71.

missing, especially for new teachers. No leader, no teacher, not even this giant of the Torah is expected to carry out their vocation without support and at least some affirmation.

The interaction between God and Moses marks a moment of highly charged doubt for Moses. Yet somehow, he acts out of some deep spiritual conversion. Moses' call represents a radical break with the past, as is often the case with second-career (and sometimes indeed first-career) teachers. Nonetheless, the call description shows that there remains a human freedom to choose, which far from being crushed, remains a constitutive element of the one who is being sent.[29] The concluding episode of Moses' career emphasizes the "not yet" of every human attainment when compared with the promises of God. Yahweh shows him "the land of which I swore" (Deut. 34:4). Moses sees, but never sets foot in the Promised Land, a reminder to teachers that they are not the sole carriers of their students' success. They cannot, and should not try, to do it all. As William Ayers points out "There is in fact no promised land in teaching; there is instead that aching, persistent tension between reality and possibility, between vulnerability and culpability."[30]

2.1 (b) Amos and Jeremiah

Amos and Jeremiah constitute two further illustrations of the vocative nature of teaching. Amos responds to the call of addressing the social and political ills that were the dominant symptoms of Israel's malady. An outsider from the southern kingdom, Amos is perhaps better positioned to sharply perceive the social and political wrongs that were rife among the northern tribes. As the story begins, Amaziah questions and tries to

[29] Ibid., 73.
[30] Ayers: 274.

control his prophetic activity. Amos, however, strongly objects; Yahweh alone has authority over him.[31] This episode reminds us that a person's vocation cannot be dictated or bounded by another. Although frequently reached in consultation with others, it is generally the result of a thoughtful and heartfelt process of personal discernment. Bollan goes even further, asserting that "all vocation stories are, on some level, an account of people falling in love with someone or something. This process is all the more emphatic when head and heart 'fire' at the same time."[32] Parker Palmer says something similar: although encounters with mentors and subjects can yield clues as to who we are, no outward teacher or teaching will have much effect until the soul assents:

> Any authentic call ultimately comes from the *teacher within*, the voice that invites me to honor the nature of my true self. . . A vocation that is not mine, no matter how externally valued, does violence to the self – in the precise sense that it violates my identity and integrity on behalf of some abstract norm. When I violate myself, I invariably end up violating the people I work with.[33]

Palmer believes that renewing one's vocation as a teacher requires cultivating a sense of the sacred, by which he means that which is worthy of respect.[34]

The call came to Amos at his daily work. Whereas we are not directly told of Amos' response to God's call, we can certainly imagine that it took some discerning. As a cattle (or sheep) breeder and fig tree tender, Amos was a relatively wealthy man, possibly a landowner. He probably lived a comfortable life in Judah, having little to do with his hostile neighbors to the north. We can safely assume that Amos did not simply volunteer to walk away from his home, his land, and his source of income, to hold up an unattractive mirror to a neighboring people, predisposed to enmity. Yet, as for Moses,

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[31] Johannes Lindblom, *Prophecy in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1962), 183-185.
[32] Bollan, 43.
[33] Palmer, *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*, 29-30.
[34] Ibid., 111.

God's call must have stirred something deep within him. The moment where God's call and deep personal resonance coincide always demands a response, a choice, discernment and decision. This is a reality many teachers might recognize in an era of multiple career opportunities. Teaching often falls short of the social status, pay, and benefits of other options which might appear immediately more attractive. But where it is truly one's vocation, the call to teach persists like a dull ache, waiting for the relief that comes with fulfilment.

On the other hand, we do not have to surmise that Jeremiah was reluctant to accept the call of God – it is abundantly clear from the text. From the beginning, Jeremiah struggles with God over the nature of his prophetic role and message. Indeed, like Moses, Jeremiah makes a real attempt to shirk the divine call. Jeremiah's rocky road through ongoing discernment and renewal of commitment resonates with our own deepest fears about our inadequacies and wishes for a comfortable, trouble-free life. Yet Jeremiah too cannot but accept the call of God. In the end, the audition is successful.

Like Moses, Jeremiah contends that he is inadequate to the task of prophecy, but God overcomes his objections with the assurance, "I am with you" (1:8); "Before I formed you in the womb, I chose you" (1:5). Jeremiah's prophetic consciousness was deepened and strengthened through the certainty of having been chosen by God before his birth for this extraordinary task.[35] Although they may often feel isolated or alone, teachers like the teachers of old are accompanied, even and especially when the going gets rough. Like the author of the famous reflective piece '*Footprints*' we are reassured by the reply "I love you and I would never leave you. During your times of trial and

[35] Lindblom, *Prophecy in Ancient Israel*, 189.

suffering when you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you."[36] Jeremiah's experience demonstrates to every teacher that there is help and there is hope, although it sometimes means we have to stretch our eyes beyond our limitations toward a transcendent horizon – a spirituality.

2.1 (c) The response expected in light of God's Covenant with the Israelites.

The response expected in light of God's Covenant with the Israelites is one of right relationship with oneself, with God, and with others, especially the marginalized, and even with the land. For instance, Amos' central concern is to restore right relationship between the people and God before it is too late. His message is that the Covenant is not about privilege regardless of how the people behave; rather it demands from them certain responsibilities, particularly regarding social injustice.

Regardless of whether the response emanates from individuals like Amos or Jeremiah or the Israelites as a people, it involves ongoing discernment and renewal of commitment. It is about right relationship lived truthfully. Over the journey in the wilderness the Israelites evolve from a rag-tag mob fleeing the heavy hand of Egypt into a free people. They lived as chattels under Pharaoh but God wants them to live freely. However, this evokes a responsibility to freely respond to God. The appropriate response which God seeks is not cowering fear, but free and committed obedience.

It is important to note that God's call and the response expected were not for the Israelites alone. This motley crew forged into "my people" (Ex 3:7) were supposed to be a light to all the nations – a way of salvation for the whole world. The call from God invites a response not just for themselves, but for all of humanity (Micah 6: 1-8). This

[36] Anonymous, *Footprints*(accessed Jan 28th 2008); available from http://www.wowzone.com/fprints.htm.

expected response is brought into sharp focus when contrasted with the behavior of the false prophets, particularly their preaching of shalom when all was not well with the political and moral order. Arthur Katz describes the quintessence of false prophecy as "the giving of a false comfort and a false assurance of peace that does not regard the truth of the conditions that need to be faced."[37] False prophets proclaim "peace, peace" when there is no peace (Jer 8:11), a tendency equally prevalent in our own society. Such rhetoric leads people astray, lulling them into a false sense of security. It robs them of their responsibility to freely respond to God's call. Teachers are called to challenge this behavior - to champion 'the truth.'

2.2 Biblical wisdom for vocation today

For Thomas Groome, "it is a sacred privilege and an awesome responsibility to be an educator. And it may be the closest we have to a universal human vocation."[38] It is easy for teachers to forget the significance and value of what they do. Whereas society needs to affirm and publicly value the work of educators, Groome asserts the firmest foundation is the educator's own spirituality.[39] Palmer goes even further, asserting that educators of all sorts are in real pain these days. That pain has compelled them to explore unconventional resources, especially the spiritual, because all spiritual traditions are ultimately concerned with getting us reconnected.[40] Describing the present day as an anxiety-ridden age of insecurity, an age that creates a society of suspicious minds, Hargreaves too admits that we are looking for an alternative source of

[37] Katz, *The Spirit of Prophecy: An Examination of the Prophetic Call*, 49.
[38] Groome, *Educating for Life: A Spiritual Vision for Every Teacher and Parent*, 34.
[39] Ibid., 37.
[40] Palmer, *To Know as We Are Known: Education as a Spiritual Journey*, ix.

meaning.[41] I now summarize some of the wisdom we might learn from biblical sources and models for one understanding of vocation today, and specifically for the vocation of teaching.

2.2 (a) Paying attention to the call

The notion of call and response in the Hebrew Scriptures invites reflection on the nature of vocation and the power of call today. We each need to discern what that call means in our own lives. Teacher educator Sam Intrator reports how by and large his student teachers describe a deep and abiding belief that they have been called to join the ranks of teachers because they believe it is a vocation. However, the subtle persistence of consumerist culture and the onslaught of professional initiatives tend to squeeze out the notion of vocation for teachers. In our autonomous existence, we might imagine that no one knows our name until we announce it, and nothing is required of us. But "here is this One who knows and calls by name, even while we imagine we are unknown and unsummoned."[42] Hearing the call takes careful attention and the ability to listen well.

2.2 (b) Thoughtful discernment and trust in God

Biblically, a right sense of call derives from a right sense of Yahweh's intentions – always what is best for us. This requires both thoughtful discernment and a deep sense of trust in God, a handing over of the reins of control rather than losing ourselves in our shortcomings or self-images. In most biblical cases of call and response, the fear and excuses and the eventual discharging of the summons serve to illustrate that extraordinary feats were carried out by ordinary people with flaws, self-doubt, and imperfections.

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[41] Hargreaves, *Teaching in the Knowledge Society: Education in the Age of Insecurity*, 42-45.
[42] *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. 1 (Nashville & New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 719.

Sometimes, we have to wrestle ourselves to come to a place of clear audition. We need to remember that Moses' sense of his own inadequacy (Ex 3:11) was not met with an assurance of his adequacy, but with an assertion that Yahweh will always be present (Ex 3:12). Further, the selection of Moses suggests that we should look for our teachers not just among the obvious candidates.

The experiences of Moses, Amos, and Jeremiah offer perhaps a more complete understanding of vocation than that of Frederick Buechner cited earlier in this chapter. Personal "deep gladness" may be symptomatic of the call, but oftentimes our sense of vocation touches a place of fear or sense of inadequacy, one we would rather leave dormant. We are, however, free to choose. The challenge is to respond faithfully through discernment and the invitation to trust.

2.2 (c) The glory of the created world

The signs saturating the call and response narratives assert that there is more at work in the world than what is defined by conventional power. Such gestures of the holy stop us in our tracks when we imagine we already know the limits of possibility. God chooses to manifest in a bush, a familiar sight in the pasturelands.[43] The burning bush is the first of many episodes in the Book of Exodus (and in the whole Bible) in which God acts through natural circumstances.[44] This phenomenon reminds us to be attentive to the presence of God in everyday things - even in the hustle and bustle of the school day - and in the glory of the created world.

[43] Jonathan Kirsch, *Moses: A Life* (New York & Canada: Ballantine Press, 1999).
[44] Lester Meyer, *The Message of Exodus* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1983), 46.

2.2 (d) Importance of silence and solitude to hear God's communication

God's invitation is constant and persistent in communicating Godself to people. Even in the wilderness, despite the sense of absence, God is still there. For Katz, wilderness is not necessarily a physical isolation, "but a conscious and willful separation from the kinds of things that are calculated to compromise."[45] Katz points especially to the compromising power of flattery and self-importance; we love the acknowledgement of other people, particularly prestigious people, but we have to be weaned away from that false need. By gradual erosion, we can come to a place in ourselves of such deceit that "one is not only false, but one thinks that one is still true."[46] In such a place we are putty in the hands of false prophets, who can seduce us into a sense of lethargy or denial, and convince us that no change is needed or that the responsibility for change is not ours. By taking a frank and frequent look at issues of the head, heart, and hands we can build a buttress in order that deception does not have its ultimate triumph.

2.2 (e) Integrity and transformation

God's call to Moses does not make him something other than he himself truly is. God wills what is best for us as well as for the people. Moses' vocation is not imposed; it is intrinsic to the context of his life. Whereas the purpose and nature of Moses' life are reshaped and redefined once he discerns the larger purpose that God proffers, the seeds were already germinating deep within his being. Further, these themes are revealed in community. Moses does not come to terms with his vocation until it is ratified by both Aaron his brother, and by the elders.

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[45] Katz, *The Spirit of Prophecy: An Examination of the Prophetic Call*, 30.
[46] Ibid., 55.

Finally, vocation and response call for transformation, a new consciousness, a new way of being in the world, a sensitivity to people who are enslaved. Vocation and response do not end with ourselves; we are also called for some service to others. There is a purpose and end to God's call; answering that call paradoxically is good for us and serves us well because it is the path to leading our lives with integrity. But living one's vocation can be exact a cost, as all three examples from the Hebrew Scriptures illustrate. Many teachers can identify with Amos, who left a comfortable and predictable situation in response to God's call. There is little that is comfortable or predictable about the average classroom; nor should there be when the lives of children and young adults are at stake. Recently, some teacher educators have called attention to these costs, especially the emotional costs of teaching.[47]

It is by traveling the path of spirituality that we come to know ourselves, to hear our calling, and to discern our vocation. Attention to the spiritual life and practices can help would-be-teachers to grow in the ability to discern and sense truth in general, and truth about the call to teach in particular. These are themes I return to in proceeding chapters.

3. To love is to see the face of God: The spiritual dimensions of relationality

I have mentioned that the second key manifestation of spirituality is relationality. It is quadratic, seeking right relationship with ourselves, others, the created world, and with God. Relationships are central to every spirituality; it is a consistent theme among traditions that good relationships are the human response to the transcendent. Our

[47] For instance, Intrator lifts up how important it is for teachers to take care of their health and spirit amid the stress that marks the first year of teaching. See Intrator, "Beginning Teachers and the Emotional Drama of the Classroom."

spirituality is the instinctive yearning for this ultimate relationship, this closeness with God.

Relationality is a central aspect of teaching. For Sonia Nieto, teaching is "a vocation based on love."[48] It involves trust, respect, and close, special relationships between students and teachers. Nieto defines love within teaching as "a blend of confidence, faith, and admiration for students and appreciation for the strengths they bring with them." She adds that the two aspects of love embedded in effective teaching are respecting and affirming students' identities and demonstrating care and respect for students.[49] Thus we see that although Nieto puts relationality front and center in education, her position is one-sided. I add that self and communal care of the teacher are equally important.

3.1 The lived relationality of teachers

3.1 (a) Relationality with oneself

How we see ourselves is essential to relationship with oneself. Indeed, according to Parker Palmer, knowing our students, and our subject depends heavily on self-knowledge. Good teachers join self, subject, and students in the fabric of life and learning; they have a capacity for connectedness. Integrated selfhood, or what Palmer terms "the undivided self", is critical to good teaching. Here, "every major thread of one's life experience is honored, creating a weave of such coherence and strength that it can hold students and subject as well as self."[50] The divided person will always remain

[48] Nieto, *What Keeps Teachers Going?* 37.
[49] Ibid., 37-38.
[50] Palmer, *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*, 2.

distant, disconnected from students, subjects, and self, even destroying others to protect its fragile identity.

I have described how the Israelites were chosen not to become an isolated elite, but to be the agent of reconciliation of the world to God. For Vertrees, reconciliation of people with the greater good[51] is a core value of education. However, this presumes not only self-knowledge, but healthy relationship with oneself.

> When we become aware of our flaws and prevail over them to work toward the greater good, we enter into education as a spiritual enterprise – one that goes far beyond labor for a paycheck, and into the realm of transcendent practice.[52]

When relationality with oneself is ignored, the dangers of over self-reliance and over reliance on others emerge. In teaching, the arrogance of self-reliance can lead to a state of self-exile from community, where department meetings and staff development initiatives are a nuisance and, more significantly, personal and professional support from colleagues an impossibility. On the other hand, over reliance on others can force a teacher either to hide behind subject matter, assessments, or state exams, in dread of the self-possession that a relational classroom demands, or to make relationships that feed the teacher's need for affirmation rather than those which support a positive teaching-learning environment.

Healthy relationship with oneself is essential to deal with the emotional cost to teaching. Teachers are called both to choreograph and lead the classroom dance. At the same time, they need a secure identity in order to respond consistently and compassionately to the steps and missteps of learning partners. In other words, relationship with self never stands alone; we relate to ourselves in community with others

[51] By this Vertrees means appreciation of and service to the greater good.
[52] Vertrees, 128.

and with the world around us. In this intricate movement, the ability to acknowledge and address our own needs and mistakes becomes imperative.

A sense of authentic identity – having a realistic and honest awareness of one's strengths and limitations – is essential to healthy relationship with oneself. There is no 'one-size-fits-all' model, no ideal person. We are like plants, full of tropisms that draw us toward certain experiences and repel us from others. Just as plants require cultivating, so developing and maintaining authentic identity requires time and effort. There are many spiritual practices that can guide a person on this journey. In the quest for wholeness, we must embrace what we dislike or find shameful about ourselves as well as what we are confident and proud of. Healthy spirituality, because it taps into our deepest desires and search for what is meaningful and transcendent, is central to the search for healthy relationship with one's own personhood.

3.1 (b) Relationality with other

In his foreword to Vertrees' book *Education as a Spiritual Enterprise: Essays on Moral Discernment,* James Kaminsky writes that what we master in our subject disciplines is of little value if it leaves us without a simple affection for those we pass on the sidewalk. An education that does not encourage us to find ways to reconcile the differences that exist between the peoples of the world is without love or justice; "and an education that does not predispose us to provide for those in need before we celebrate our own success and comfort is something less than excellent – it is an empty thing."[53] Good education is born from and in turn engenders positive relations with others.

[53] Ibid., 14.

Palmer lifts up how the ecological paradigm has moved from Darwinian survival of the fittest to one of communal collaboration. Death and struggle are now understood as elements in the ongoing life of the community, rather than the ultimate destiny of the individual. This is also true of the physics of subatomic particles. Rather than acting as independent units, subatomic particles behave as a set of independent relationships that try to connect with other things. Reality on a number of levels is now understood as a web of communal relationships. Like the world of nature, the best way to know reality is in communion with it.

An environment that prioritizes care, respect, and mutual support is best suited to fostering healthy relationships between people. Like Noddings, Hargreaves acknowledges the crucial nature of school as a caring community, but he warns against contrived collegiality. I add another note of caution: a community must care enough to challenge its members, gently but firmly. A community that affirms without challenge, that seeks a sort of warm fuzziness regardless of the cost, is not a true caring community. In busy, demanding environments such as schools, it is tempting to avoid issues that might cause conflict. But healthy disagreement can push a community forward; good critique in any setting can lead to improvement.

Relationality in the teaching-learning environment needs to be grounded in reality; teachers are real people engaged in living within the messy circumstances of our time. Good relations with others cannot be taken for granted. For instance, Vertrees highlights the difficulties presented when teachers who entered the profession because they "just love kids" then have to come to grips with the reality that some children almost

defy affection![54] He goes on to assert that it is natural for educators to gravitate toward those students or colleagues that most clearly align with their world view. The difficulty comes with students or colleagues who do not share these passions or views. How we think about people is a core value and positive relationality needs ongoing work; it is very unlikely without spiritual discipline to nurture and sustain it. A sufficiently secure sense of self is a prerequisite to healthy relationship with others, so that our reserves of emotional energy are not completely consumed by our own needs and something is left to meet the needs and challenges around us. But where does that sense of oneself come from if not an intentional spirituality?

3.1 (c) Leadership and relationality[55]

David Tuohy writes of a paradigm shift from leadership as ownership and authority to a model of stewardship and service.

> The development of transformational leadership involves a radical shift from leader behaviour which focuses on planning, control and predictability, to an ability to live with ambiguity, trust and uncertainty.[56]

The prime concern of transformational leaders is the quality of relationships in the school; the commitment is to dialogue rather than debate. When leaders seek to build a sense of shared meaning, develop community, and work towards achieving the school mission, relationality is key.

Andrew Wright argues for collective leadership and relationality in education. Effective relations and collective responsibility among teachers for school leadership is

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[54] Ibid., 45.
[55] Leadership in education is a large and multivalent topic. Here I briefly lift up some insights from writers on educational leadership simply as an illustration of the complexities of relationality in a school community.
[56] Tuohy,182-183.

critical because "every school has a responsibility to nurture pupils into a broad set of shared national spiritual values, as well as into the values of its own specific tradition."[57] It is incumbent on schools to identify and publicly own their ideological commitments, in order to acknowledge, celebrate and transmit the values and world-views to which they are committed.

Palmer reminds us that we have a long tradition of approaching leadership through 'the power of positive thinking'. But by failing to look at our shadows we feed the dangerous delusion that our efforts are always well intended, our power is always benign, and the problem is always in those we are trying to lead! Leaders need more than the technical skills to manage the external world; they also need the spiritual skills to journey inward toward the source of both shadow and light. But it is so much easier to try to manipulate external realities than deal with the darkness of our own souls. If we do not understand that enemy within, we will find a thousand ways of making someone 'out there' into the enemy, becoming leaders who oppress rather than liberate others.[58] Of course, this is especially dangerous when dealing with the young and highly impressionable souls of children and adolescents.

The effects and repercussions of the various types of relationships within a school setting return us to the ecological, web-like model that suggests a dynamic quality to relationality. In the quadratic of self, God, others, and creation, how we relate to any one of these will invariably impact on all the others. Just as I previously advocated travelling the path of spirituality to discern vocation (see *2.2.2 (e)*), so now I propose that attention

[57] Wright, *Spirituality and Education*, 113.
[58] Parker J. Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000).

to the spiritual life and practices can help us towards healthy relationality. This calls for a spiritual pedagogy that sets out to sustain educators in their vocation and relationality.

4. The challenges and opportunities to proposing a spiritual pedagogy

If central motivators such as the desire to serve and relationality reflect the spirituality of teachers, then teachers need a spiritual pedagogy. Crafting such a pedagogy will form the substantive focus of subsequent chapters. For now I explore a number of challenges and opportunities to proposing a spiritual pedagogy today.

4.1 The breakdown of traditional dynamics

Hargreaves points to a 'loss of learning' as the significant challenge to teaching today, resulting from the effects of reforms.[59] These reforms include quests to narrow achievement gaps that typically do not question the type of achievement at stake, and the 'karaoke curriculum', where teachers are expected to serve up scripted performances. Vertrees shares this concern, remarking that

> our profession is still filled with individuals who do no more than consume the pre-packaged materials sent to them by vendors. . . . Teachers are encouraged to become externally controlled through the use of pre-packaged materials, externally defined outcomes, and government regulations.[60]

For Hargreaves, the loss of learning extends to the breakdown of traditional dynamics. He laments that rather than engaging with students in of out-of-classroom experiences, teachers are no longer volunteering for extra-curricular activities; rather than experiencing continuous professional learning and development, teachers are subjected to mandated and usually inadequate in-service training on government priorities. The

[59] Hargreaves, *Teaching in the Knowledge Society: Education in the Age of Insecurity*, 146.
[60] Vertrees, 91.

fallout directly affects teachers' spirits, resulting in decreasing morale, and a deep sense of professional disillusionment. They find that they are preparing students neither for the knowledge society nor for character and community beyond it.

The negative image and attitude towards teachers is another element of the breakdown of traditional dynamics. According to Vertrees,

> From the United States Secretary of Education down to the homeless man on the corner there is a universal rhetoric that teachers are poor, that teaching is a poor career choice, that people teach because they cannot do, that education is failing, and other negative comments. Through this universal denigration of the profession, good people are deterred from entering the field and existing educators are demoralized.[61]

Many teachers in the United States and elsewhere live with paltry pay and poor working conditions, yet are expected to shape the adults of the future.

Whereas some educators propose to address this breakdown by rethinking what professional learning and support for teachers should look like; I add that here indeed is an opportunity to put spirituality on the table.[62] For this to happen we need to re-imagine education so that it combines the mutual personal trust of relationships with professional trust and accountability, and we need to foster spiritual conversation among partners in education. Careful listening is essential to spiritual conversation, an almost forgotten skill in the noise and frenetic pace of the twenty-first century. In today's society, we are taught to listen to everything and everyone but ourselves. How do we listen to our lives in a culture that is consumed with data and obsessed with information, which expects teachers to continually crank out standardized materials to be regurgitated in standardized classrooms using standardized methods? I am reminded of the Gospel challenge: "Those

[61] Ibid., 50.
[62] See, for instance, Hargreaves, *Teaching in the Knowledge Society: Education in the Age of Insecurity*, 161.

who have ears to hear, let then hear" (Mk 4:9), or the lovely prologue to St Benedict's *Rule*: "Listen carefully my child . . . and incline the ear of your heart."[63] Verbalizing is not our only form of communication. We need to re-attune our ears to hear what the inner self is speaking; we need to foster quiet and trustworthy conditions to allow that self to speak.

4.2 Diversity

A second challenge that exists in proposing a spiritual pedagogy is that of diversity. Nieto writes that Black, Asian, American Indian, and Latino students now account for nearly 39% of students in U.S. public schools, while almost 90% of teachers are white.[64] Villegas and Lucas' analysis on equity and social justice aspects of the teacher workforce problem concludes that increasing the racial and ethnic diversity of the teaching workforce is imperative. This can begin with teacher education programs and educational communities that regard diversity as a resource.[65]

Research on spiritual diversity in schools is limited, perhaps because of the historical separation of church and state. Of course, just because spirituality is not addressed by the curriculum, it does not mean that teachers or students leave their spiritual selves in the parking lot.[66] Elizabeth Tisdell has shown that nearly all writers who discuss spiritual development as change over time tend to ignore the significance of

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[63] Cited in Bollan, 40.
[64] Nieto, *What Keeps Teachers Going?* 107.
[65] Cited in Cochran Smith, *Policy, Practice, and Politics in Teacher Education*,147-148.
[66] The situation in Britain might serve as an interesting comparison here. In 1994, Grace Davie published a fascinating study, *Believing without Belonging*. Her study found that, for instance, while only 15% of the British population embraces organized religion, 72% express belief in God. Well over half the British population (56%) believe but don't belong: i.e. continue to hold a "private commitment to the importance of the spiritual dimension of their lives, despite only nominal allegiance to religious communities." See Wright, *Spirituality and Education*, 51. Andrew Wright concludes that the spiritual landscape in Britain is eclectic, complex, and ambiguous, making the quest for ultimate meaning and purpose all the more significant. This, he asserts, is precarious ground for teachers.

sociocultural context. In so doing, they tend to assume and therefore privilege a White, middle-class experience primarily informed by the Judeo-Christian tradition.[67] Tisdell's work seems to suggest that the reality of spiritual diversity will only be recognized when the vast differences in sociocultural backgrounds and religious traditions are taken into account.

In effect, teachers' experiences and identities are often very different to those of their students, forming one reason why authentic relationality can be difficult to achieve. Moore-Johnson tells us that efficacy (meeting the needs of students in their classrooms) is important in new teachers' career decisions. However, she also reports that collegial support and identification with students - moments of connection that keep teachers engaged and optimistic – can help enormously.

4.3 Outcomes-based education and accountability

Some authors point to current trends of outcome-based education and accountability as a drain on classroom vitality. In many states, students' poor performance on a standardized test can put the jobs of teachers in jeopardy. With the stakes set this high, the question of the greater good is forgotten as educators are forced into the bind of self preservation. This is of particular concern to Vertrees, who sees service to the greater good as the ultimate purpose of teaching. In other words, people can reject formalized religion and yet still desire a universal attainment of a greater good; this is the goal of education.[68]

[67] Elizabeth J. Tisdell, "Spirituality and Emancipatory Adult Education in Women Adult Educators for Social Change," *Adult Education Quaterly* 50, no. 4 (2000): 327.
[68] Vertrees, 80-81.

How do we avoid intellectual and spiritual ossification, Vertrees asks, when the latest standardized test becomes the only way the essentialists will verify competence?[69] The fallout for Vertrees is deeply unnerving: in concentrating so heavily on the technological proficiency of our children we are neglecting the human qualities that are needed for the preservation of a humane, democratic society. Kaminsky echoes his concerns, insisting that education cannot be a narrow technical achievement defined by test scores, academic awards, diplomas, certificates, and degrees; an education is about who we can become.[70]

Of course, re-envisioning teaching as a spiritual enterprise will not solve the national quandaries of standardized testing, questions of education quality, teacher shortages, or how we assess teacher preparation.[71] However, the collateral damage of restrictive and conservative methodologies, fear of job loss, and over-emphasis on standardized tests is nothing less than a central challenge to the soul of teaching. "The teacher's soul must be nourished if the student's soul is to develop. There is nothing our students desire from us more that our attention, our authentic presence."[72] The choices teachers make become crucial in dealing with this situation. For instance, instead of

[69] Ibid., 84.
[70] Kaminsky in his Foreword to Ibid.
[71] Indeed, some educators might see spirituality as a hindrance rather than a help in dealing with these quandaries. For instance, teacher educator Frederick Hess argues for a market approach to reforming schools. This approach demands unbridled competition. For Hess, one of the key impediments to competition as an effective tool for school reform is that teachers are attracted to education for its child-centered and humanistic character. "Competition is fundamentally about fear," writes Hess, and he advocates for-profit schools that would attract teachers motivated by individual rewards and material incentives. See Frederick M. Hess, *The Work Ahead*(Hoover Institution, 2001, accessed Jan 18th 2007); available from http://www.hoover.org/publications/ednext/3381046.html. Last retrieved 1/18/2007
[72] Miller, *Education and the Soul: Toward a Spiritual Curriculum*, 10.

rushing through the day, teachers can decide to take the time to enjoy the unexpected uplifting moments; such experiences are part of every school day.[73]

4.4 Postmodernism: The legacy of modernity and a renewed appetite for the spiritual

Philosophers and social analysts tell us that we are living in the post-modern age; an age that resists modernity's over-claims for reason, rejects the status quo, and questions the assumption that evolving history signals progress.[74] This era of postmodernity deconstructs universals in favor of local knowledge and rearranges time and space in 'virtual reality'. Society today is characterized by growing social instability. Yet despite the shaking foundation, humanity greets this fragmentation and instability in the only way possible for survival – by turning toward community and gaining a new appreciation for diversity of cultures and plurality of beliefs. Even that icon of rugged individualism – the US cowboy – is becoming unstuck as he abandons the solitary restlessness and hastily forged gangs of convenience and reaches out for mutual, meaningful relationship.[75]

The nature of public schooling in the modern era left little room for the language of spirituality. Modernity promoted problem-solving and systems thinking at the expense of informal relationships, an imbalance that persists to the present day. Few teacher educators, even those very much concerned with the person of the teacher use the language of spirituality. Postmodernity offers opportunities to bring spirituality into the

[73] This practice and other suggestions are discussed further in chapter 5.
[74] Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism* (Grand rapids, Michigan/Cambridge U.K.: William B. Eerdmans, 1996).
[75] See for instance as depicted in James Mangold, "3:10 to Yuma," (USA: 2007).

conversation precisely because it turns us away from a world dominated by reason, rules, and authority.

For Palmer, postmodernism suggests that we can never speak of the world without at the same time speaking of ourselves. An organic relationship between the knower and the known proposes "a classroom practice that would teach us not to rearrange the world but to learn its intricate relationships."[76] We employ conventional education because it is the easiest way to teach, because mass education has forced such conceptions of efficiency on us, because our schools are under funded, overpopulated, and understaffed. But we can always choose otherwise.

Although spirituality can be a complex and controversial issue about which there is no public agreement, the spiritual quest is universal. In today's climate, despite the marginalization of traditional cultures of religiosity, there is a renewed interest in spiritual questions. Postmodernism has been described as a movement of resistance to a long oppression of the spirit, characterized by spiritual hunger. In a disconnected world yearning for re-connection, this is a time that favors diversity and embraces the other.

4.5 Spirituality as formal curriculum

While acknowledging the preference among some advocates to designate an official place for 'spiritual studies', I am not arguing for spirituality as part of the formal curriculum.[77] Rather I am suggesting that since it is intrinsic to the human condition - we are our spiritual selves - we can address matters of the spirit as and when they arise in educational settings, and we can intentionally promote the spirituality of the teacher as

[76] Palmer, *To Know as We Are Known: Education as a Spiritual Journey*, 38.
[77] Noddings, for instance, envisions the study of spirituality as part of the formal curriculum as 'religious study' with course requirements resulting in the earning of a grade.

the grounding of a spiritual pedagogy. My reservations to the formal curricular approach are two-fold: by officially placing the study of spirituality onto the curriculum, we run the risk of reinforcing spirituality as something that can be separated, as something apart or outside rather than intrinsic to our very selves. Secondly, we risk imitating the British situation, where spirituality as formal curriculum since 1988 has for the most part only served to burden teachers with yet another set of attainment targets and performance tables.[78]

Teaching is a vocation based on healthy relationships. As such, it is best sustained by a spirituality of the teacher, regardless of who, where, or what they are teaching. We must first acknowledge the centrality of spirit to human anthropology and address it as part of ourselves and of each life situation we encounter, from every silent moment to every noisy encounter of our daily lives. Further, we can develop an approach to teaching and teacher support and formation that honors spirituality. As an instance of how this might be done, I turn in chapter 3 to the wisdom of the spiritual tradition of Ignatius of Loyola.

Conclusion

Teachers do well when their work in some way fulfills their vocation, and when they are nourished by supportive, mutually caring relationships. Teachers cannot be left

[78] Under the 1988 Education Reform Act, all schools in the UK are legally required to attend to the spiritual development of their pupils. This is regularly assessed by the government school inspection agency, OFSTED. Andrew Wright asserts that while the Act specifically acknowledges the importance of spirituality in education, the realties which confront schools tend to deny scope for much work in this area. The result, he tells us, is a system of schooling "more concerned with attainment targets and performance tables than children's spiritual development." See Wright, *Spirituality and Education*, 2. However, where the general British population is concerned, Wright agrees that despite the ground lost by traditional cultures of spirituality, there is a renewed interest among people in spiritual questions.

holding one end of a caring relationship. No less than any other segment of the population, teachers are in need of spiritual care.

School support systems and teacher preparation programs cannot hope to adequately prepare and sustain teachers - new, continuing, or veteran - if they are working with an inadequate anthropology. To be human is to be spiritual. However, the hectic nature of many schools and the changing challenges of teaching make reflection, communication, and relationship building difficult. The challenge for contemporary teacher education is to find ways to allow teachers to foster their inner lives as an essential aspect of healthy professional and personal formation.

Spirituality is contextual; for teachers, one of the primary contexts for fostering spirituality can be the workplace. New teachers report that, among other factors, they are sustained and affirmed when they encounter collegial support, when faculty members acknowledge and support each other in the challenges of teaching, and when they see opportunities for professional growth beyond the classroom. By supporting caring, committed, persevering, and effective teachers, we also support the students who most need them.

Chapter 3 turns to Ignatian spirituality as a rich and appropriate resource for teacher spirituality and for developing a spiritual pedagogy. It explores the richness of the Ignatian tradition in order to undergird my attempt in chapter 4 to craft a spiritual pedagogy that works to sustain the educator. The call for such a pedagogy is sometimes explicit but mostly latent in the literature of education; perhaps these early decades of the new millennium present an opportunity to allow it to breathe openly.

Chapter 3: Ignatian spirituality as framework for crafting a spiritual pedagogy

"The quickest way to a good education is to consult the Jesuits: their schools have never been bettered."
(Francis Bacon, philosopher, 1561-1626)

Introduction

Chapter 2 reviewed the spirituality of teaching as a missing dimension from the conversation about education. Moreover, it framed how a spiritual hermeneutic might sustain the educator and thus benefit the whole school community. I now turn to the rich tradition of Ignatian spirituality to expand the current discourse and help craft a spiritual pedagogy.

Every religious tradition, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism, and so on, has its own spirituality. Indeed each of these traditions has many different spiritual nuances and various combinations thereof. Multiple subsets exist within the Christian tradition; even within Catholicism we find Dominican, Franciscan, and Benedictine spiritualities, to name but a few. While recognizing the spiritual value of other traditions I choose the spirituality of Ignatius Loyola and the Society of Jesus as a helpful resource for teachers. The nature of the Ignatian charism is suited to teaching, as born out by the success of Jesuit education over a 500 year history. It can be useful for teachers because the substantive pedagogy and school system to which it gave rise is clearly rooted in Ignatian spirituality. I hold up the spiritual bedrock of the Ignatian tradition as just one example of how the spiritual potential of education can be appropriated by any school and the teachers therein.

Ignatian spirituality fits into the larger reality of human spiritual hunger. Robert J. Starratt reviews some historical frameworks for understanding the broad landscape of spirituality. Beginning with native spiritualities grounded in creation myths, (these ancient traditions appear to be deeply rooted in cosmology – beliefs about how the world came and continues to come into being), he moves to describe the emerging transcendent spirituality of today. Drawing primarily from the work of Thomas Berry, Starratt's perspective challenges both the traditional scientist and the traditional religionist because it attributes to the cosmos a kind of intentionality and purposefulness. He maintains that this position is recognized among scientists, believers, and non believers, rather universally.

Today's transcendent spirituality, according to Starratt, is characterized by "a whole new consciousness of personal and social identity, a new sense of community" and a new social, political and ethical response to the ecological crisis.[1] It resonates deeply with the native creation spiritualities and their awareness of God's presence in everything. At the same time, its solidarity with global crises moves beyond empathy and demands a human response. This juxtaposition of belonging and response is also the hallmark, the Principle and Foundation, of Ignatian spirituality. Framed in this context, and with its triadic dynamic between self, God, and responding in words and deeds to what is other, especially to whom and what is in need of help, it is clear that Ignatian spirituality has much to offer in the contemporary climate.

This chapter first explores the historical resource of Ignatian spirituality. My central claim is that the Jesuit tradition of education is rooted in the *Spiritual Exercises*,

[1] Robert J. Starratt, "Historical Frameworks for Understanding Spirituality: Implications for Contemporary Education," (Boston College, 2007), 21.

just as the *Exercises* became the bedrock of all Jesuit life. I begin with a brief outline of the origins of Ignatian spirituality and how the Jesuit ministry of education began. Next, I review some of the general characteristics of Ignatian spirituality. I go on to analyze how Jesuit education developed in the early years, up to and including the publication of the *Ratio Studiorum* of 1599. The best practice of the *Ratio Studiorum* might be no longer feasible or appropriate, but Jesuit education in the spirit of the *Ratio* continues today to promote excellence and seeks to uphold the highest standards and most authentic values in education. In the penultimate section I analyze how an understanding of the spirituality of education is reflected in contemporary Jesuit writings, and note the relevance of Ignatian spirituality for educators today. Finally, I address some critiques of Ignatian spirituality.

Reclaiming the spiritual heritage of Jesuit Education can form the basis of a spiritually inspired pedagogy that honors both teacher and student in any school. Such a pedagogy not only has the goal of encouraging teachers to re-visit their motivations and ideals and re-claim their vocation; it also under girds and sustains how teachers fulfill their vocation by putting their spirituality to work in teaching practice.

A note of caution

I am not alone in proposing that we look to spiritual resources for sustaining and renewing the vocation of the teacher. I have mentioned how Parker Palmer asserts that the pain of disconnection troubling educators these days urges them toward unconventional resources. This is exactly where the spiritual traditions offer hope "for all

of them are ultimately concerned with getting us reconnected."[2] However, it is necessary from the outset to sound a word of caution; we need to tread softly. Past marriages of Catholic Christianity and education have sometimes rendered harmful and debilitating effects on educational practice. Therefore I describe and draw from the Ignatian tradition as a source rather than an end. I am not promoting Jesuit education as the ideal, nor am I suggesting that schools should opt for some pre-packaged spirituality as remedy to all ills. Rather I propose that we plumb the rich tradition of Ignatian spirituality as a test case example for sustaining and nourishing teachers in the difficult but rewarding work they do. This applies to all teachers, regardless of belief patterns or faith tradition, of who they are or where they work. All the personal embrace of such a spirituality requires is an open heart and mind. Of course that is easier said than done in today's climate, a point that I discuss later in this chapter.

It is interesting that some Jesuit scholars sound a similar note. Referring specifically to Ignatian spirituality, Lonsdale cautions against unreflective enthusiasm and approval. No spirituality is perfect. Indeed, every approach is liable to "decay, misuse, misappropriation, or deviation from its original evangelical inspiration, both personally and institutionally."[3] Success generates enthusiasm, and Ignatian spirituality in its many fora has certainly seemed to meet certain needs in recent times. But enthusiasm can be dangerous if it remains unexamined or insufficiently critical. What is good may conceal or block what is better. We need to be constantly critical of any practice in order to build on and improve those which are life-giving and to avoid and omit those which are destructive or oppressive.

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[2] Palmer, *To Know as We Are Known: Education as a Spiritual Journey*, x.
[3] David Lonsdale, *Eyes to See, Ears to Hear: An Introduction to Ignatian Spirituality*, ed. Philip Sheldrake (New York: Orbis, 2000), 207-208.

1. Ignatian spirituality

1.1 The origins

Every spirituality develops in response to the movements of a particular time, culture, and set of circumstances. The story of Ignatius of Loyola, his dramatic conversion, and the cultural context of his era has been told many times. It is not my intention to repeat it here. What is significant to this project is the story of his evolving spirituality. Barry and Doherty remind us that Ignatius was virtually illiterate in matters theological and spiritual when he began his spiritual journey.[4] During his recovery after the fall of Pamplona, he realized that God could stir his heart to draw him in one direction, but that there was an enemy of God who was trying to draw his heart in a different and conflicting direction. Because he could not identify any reason why God would single him out, he became convinced that God was calling everyone to intimacy and service – a remarkably optimistic expectation and high anthropology. This constitutes the foundational reality, (known as the Principle and Foundation – the vocation of every person to love and service) of Ignatian spirituality.

Finding God in all things constituted Ignatius' own inner attitude: "He found God not only in quiet prayer; but also in the confused messiness of his daily work, with all of its problems and concerns, as well as in his ordinary conversations with others."[5] Ignatius realized that God works through the ordinary events of everyday; the challenge

[4] William A. Barry and Robert G. Doherty, *Contemplatives in Action: The Jesuit Way* (New York: Paulist Press, 2002), 9.
[5] Jose Ignacio Tellechea Idigoras, *Ignatius of Loyola: The Pilgrim Saint*, trans. Cornelius Michael Buckley SJ (Chicago: Loyola, 1994), 584. Of the very many biographies of Ignatius of Loyola, I use this work as my principle source. Tellechea Idigoras (1928 -), a fellow Basque but non-Jesuit has the advantage of understanding the culture and context of the early years and formative childhood experiences of Ignatius, and also offers a critical eye to his life, work, shortcomings, and inspirations.

to humanity is to find God in all things, events, and circumstances of daily living,[6] and to respond with loving service.

There is little that is new in such a positive cosmology. In many ways it is reminiscent of the Hebrew Book of Ecclesiastes which advises us to love life and live it well, or the poets and writers who advise us to appreciate the "wine and roses" while we can.[7] Ignatius' contribution was the praxis emphasis: the inclusion of attention to images, desires, and feelings as sources of God's self-disclosure to the person, and the tracking of personal behavior and attitudes which effectively reveal or blind us to God's presence and invitation in the bits and pieces of everyday life.

Ignatius developed rules for discerning the spirits and for testing what is of God and what is not. Discernment of spirits is another hallmark of Ignatian spirituality and is directed toward interpreting one's life and the decisions to be made. Eventually he developed what he called the examen in order to recognize the movements of God's Spirit in ordinary experience. The examen, meant to be undertaken by a person twice a day, is simply a quiet moment of taking stock. Born out of a sense of gratitude for the gracious goodness of God, the person reflects on the events of the day and looks for patterns of the Spirit's movements over time. Like all Ignatian spiritual practices, it is conducted without self-praise or blame; the idea is to track how we allow God's presence into our lives and how we block or turn away from that presence through our human sinfulness.

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[6] *Const.,* #288. When referring to this bedrock of Ignatian spirituality, I will use the well-known summary phrase "finding God in all things."

[7] "*They are not long, the days of wine and roses*." Ernest Dawson, (accessed Dec 16th 2007); available from http://www.quotesandsayings.com/finquoteframes.htm.

Tellechea Idígoras insists that, like John of the Cross or Theresa of Avila, Ignatius was a very great mystic, although the wrapping is different. "Before anything else, he was a man infused with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, one who listened to God all of the time."[8] In Ignatius' case however, mysticism is not withdrawal from normal activities or the isolated life. It is an awareness of God's presence in all things, which is then responded to as loving service.

1.2 The *Spiritual Exercises*

The roots of all Jesuit ministry are firmly anchored in the *Spiritual Exercises*. This book, directly from the hand of Ignatius, is a set of directions written for those who assist others in transforming their lives. The goal of the *Exercises* is to reorder oneself and one's relation with others in the world by directly experiencing God on some deep, personal level.[9] This meeting with God involves a knowing with the heart as well as the head, what Ignatius called "interior knowledge" or "interiority". This was a kind of recapitulation of the religious experience of Ignatius – an alternative to the highly ritualized forms of religious practice of the time.

During his recuperation, Ignatius became convinced that God was speaking to him through his inner experiences of images, desires, and feelings. The process of consulting the inner movements of the soul during discernment became a distinctive feature of his spirituality and the paradigm for what he would teach others. In attending to his inner inspiration, he sometimes experienced great internal enlightenment. This

[8] Jose Ignacio Tellechea Idígoras, *Ignatius of Loyola: The Pilgrim Saint*, trans. Cornelius Michael Buckley SJ (Chicago: Loyola, 1994), 482.
[9] Wilfred L. LaCroix S.J., *The Jesuit Spirit of Education: Ignatius, Tradition, and Today's Questions* (Kansas: Rockhurst College, 1989), 11.

confirmed his conviction that he was being taught by God.[10] A short time later he began to commit his religious experiences to paper in order to help others; thus the *Spiritual Exercises* began to take form. The intention is clear; Ignatian spirituality and helping others go hand-in-hand.

The experience of two conflicting spirits moving within him led Ignatius on a journey that was at once internal and external; that man with the limp would soon become one of the greatest walkers in Europe. The first stop on his pilgrimage was Montserrat. Tellechea Idígoras explains the two-fold attraction of Montserrrat: the Black Virgin enshrined there, devotion to whom was important to both the courtier milieu and to peasant people from Guipuzcoa, and the monastery inspired by a spirit of reform (the Benedictines of Montserrat had restored the divine office and the practice of contemplation). In Montserrat, Ignatius made his confession with Jean Chanon, a saintly, competent French monk who introduced him to books of rich spiritual heritage and was very influential on his spiritual formation. He also learned that a general confession is not the end but the beginning; the road ahead is made up of stages and he must 'exercise' for these as he had at dueling or dancing.[11]

Tellechea Idígoras asserts that the power of the *Exercises* lies in its respect for each person's freedom and interiority and the overriding concern for the conditions that enhance or prevent this freedom. He draws from Gerard Fessard, for example, who states that the *Exercises* ensure the maximum of authentic freedom for making any particular choice or choosing a state of life. The First Week deals with the essential elements in the human drama of striving for liberty. It is only in recognizing one's own sin, the truth

[10] Ignatius Loyola, "The Autobiography," in *Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works*, ed. George E. Ganss (New York & Mahweh, NJ: Paulist, 1991), # 27, 79.
[11] See Tellechea Idigoras, *Ignatius of Loyola: The Pilgrim Saint*, Part I: Chapter 23.

about one's existence, and by making a firm resolve to purify oneself that it is possible to move to an existential understanding of faith, to unity of oneself, to liberty, and to a life that makes sense.[12]

As a book, however, the *Spiritual Exercises* makes dry reading. Of course it is not meant to be read but to be put into practice:

> This is why it is as demanding and meticulous as performing piano finger-exercises. For one who has no desire to learn to play the piano, such lessons are boring, but for the aspiring concert pianist they are lessons that are wonderfully effective and absolutely necessary.[13]

Tellechea Idígoras cites many instances where former adversaries of the *Exercises* were eventually persuaded to make them and experienced a heartfelt change of attitude. One of the most memorable occurred in the late 1530s shortly after Ignatius arrived in Rome. During this period he gave the *Exercises* to former opponent Dr. Ortiz, a prominent scripture scholar who had once denounced Ignatius to the Paris Inquisition.[14] Ortiz later claimed that Ignatius taught him a *nueva theologia*, not one that a person learns in order to teach but in order to live.[15]

John O'Malley asserts that the *Exercises* represented something different; not only did they create a unique program of retreat, but they influenced all the other ministries undertaken.

> They supplied the design for the basic course or movement the Jesuits wanted to make operative in whatever they did – a movement that in its first instance entailed turning to God in a new and more profound way, which brought with it a process of spiritual growth and an increasing recognition of God's activity in

[12] Fessard, in Ibid., 510.
[13] Ibid., 203-204.
[14] Dr Pedro Ortiz, (1501-1548), held chairs at the Sorbonne and Salamanca, before he was appointed as Charles V's special agent in Rome. After he made the Exercises, he became a staunch defender of the first Jesuits, even obtaining an audience for them with Pope Paul III.
[15] Tellechea Idigoras, *Ignatius of Loyola: The Pilgrim Saint*, 400.

> everything in the world. Concommitment with this movement and a test of its authenticity was the inner experience of consolation or, as Nadal said, "a relish for spiritual things."[16]

The desire of the Jesuits and goal of the *Exercises* was to live and help others to live according to God's will affirmed by consolation, which Nadal[17] describes as "an inner joy, serenity in judgment, a relish, a light, a reassuring step forward, a clarification of insight."[18] Desolation was just the opposite, characterized by feelings of confusion, restlessness, and doubt. Drawing from his own experiences, Ignatius expected God's manifest presence within the soul to be accessible, in some degree, to all human beings. A person's discernment and response to this presence is confirmed or refuted by their experiences of consolation or desolation, respectively.

The *Spiritual Exercises,* Ignatius asserted, are "the best means that I can think, feel and understand in this life, both to help a man benefit himself and bring help, profit and advantage to many others."[19] But before they became a book, the *Exercises* were a praxis, and before that, a personal experience. Ignatius systematized and universalized his own experience in the *Exercises* and showed people how to open themselves to hear their own invitation from God.

1.3 Ignatian spirituality and Jesuit education

O'Malley insists that the *Formula of the Institute* and the *Spiritual Exercises* are equally significant foundational documents to the Jesuit charism. This makes a powerful combination; the *Formula* emphasize ministry, the *Exercises* spirituality. The *Formula*

[16] John W. O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), 89.
[17] Jeronimo Nadal (1507-1580) played a major role as interpreter of Ignatian spirit. He was named vicar-general in 1554.
[18] Nadal quoted by O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 83.
[19] Ignatius cited in Tellechea Idigoras, *Ignatius of Loyola: The Pilgrim Saint*, 504.

of the Institute was a document describing the raison d'être of the new Society. It met with Papal approval in 1540 as did the revised version of 1550; the focus of both versions is the ministries to be undertaken by the new Society. Even so, it is to the *Exercises* that O'Malley turns to really understand the lives, works and inspirations of the early Jesuits:

> the *Exercises* set the pattern and goals of all the ministries in which the Society engaged, even though it was not always explicitly recognized as doing so. There is no understanding the Jesuits without reference to that book.[20]

What makes then all the more significant is that the *Exercises* were never intended exclusively for members of the Society.

For the early Jesuits, ministry and spirituality are two sides of the same coin; one is an empty shell of reality without the other. Moreover, the ministry that came to define the work of Jesuits was education. The distinctive Ignatian charism connects the mystical spirituality flowing from the *Exercises* with the service of others. In education, God can be found in all things through a formal learning process cultivated in Jesuit schools. Ignatian pedagogy has a mystical character – to find God in all things, regardless of the discipline of learning. Like the person who guides the retreatant[21] in the *Exercises*, the role of the teacher becomes a defining ministerial role, one the first Jesuits appreciated for its awesome responsibility.

The schools quickly became part of the Jesuits' self-understanding. O'Malley is adamant about this point:

> The Jesuits were the first religious order in the Catholic Church to undertake formal education as a major ministry. They became a "teaching order." The

[20] O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 4..

[21] Many terms have been used over the years to describe the person giving the *Exercises* and the person making them. Although the guide came to be known as the director, this was a later term. Ignatius usually used "the one who gives" or "the one who delivers." I will use the tern 'guide' for the person giving and "retreatant' for the one making the *Exercises*.

> boldness of the decision for its day is difficult for us to recapture. . . By the time the Society was suppressed by papal edict in 1773, it was operating more than eight hundred universities, seminaries, and especially secondary schools almost around the globe. The world had never seen before nor has it seen since such an immense network of educational institutions operating on an international basis.[22]

O'Malley asserts that no expression occurs more frequently in Jesuit documentation than "to help souls". Ignatius used this phrase again and again to motivate himself and his companions. By "soul" Ignatius meant the whole person, so help could be provided in the form of bread for the body, learning for the mind, and especially by facilitating people to achieve a better relationship and trust in God. "They sought to be mediators of an immediate experience of God that would lead to an inner change of heart or a deepening of religious sensibilities already present."[23] This is the ultimate purpose to helping souls, and the ministries were the means to achieve it.

Of course, Ignatian spirituality is not a static thing. It was borrowed, adapted, and augmented from the first time Ignatius shared his *Spiritual Exercises* with the people of Barcelona, sometime in the 1520s. A recent and profound renewal of this charism occurred with the election of Pedro Arrupe as Superior General[24] in the wake of the second Vatican Council (1962-1965). His leadership covered the period of transformation for the Catholic Church after Vatican II. As a result, he urged Jesuits to rediscover their charism to be 'contemplatives in action' – a renewed articulation of the original principle of 'finding God in all things'. For a Society in the late 20th century, this

[22] O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 15-16.
[23] Ibid., 19.
[24] Fr Pedro Arrupe served as Superior General of the Society of Jesus from 1965 until 1983.

meant "finding God in a world marked by Hiroshima and Auschwitz, a world fraught with division, inequity, and blind hatred."[25]

Arrupe insisted that "it is reality itself that opens our eyes to the One who transcends reality."[26] The recovery of this Ignatian mysticism transformed the way Jesuits went about their traditional apostolate of education. Kevin Burke asserts that after Vatican II, Jesuits, with a renewed sense of discernment, continued to run schools, send missionaries to so-called mission lands and give retreats, but in radically new ways.[27] He says that this challenge has had a very positive effect on Jesuit schools. Curricular changes include immersion trips and community service projects. Wider innovations include the Jesuit Refugee Service (1980) and the promotion of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps.

2. Characteristics of Ignatian spirituality

2.1 *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*

The Jesuit motto, *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*, means 'to the greater glory of God.' It is an Ignatian cornerstone - the concrete response to God's love and invitation to respond. Anything done well gives God glory. Gerard Manley Hopkins articulates: "To lift up the hands in prayer gives God glory, but a man with a dungfork in his hand, a woman with a slop pail give [God] glory too. . . All things give [God] glory if you mean

[25] Kevin F. Burke, "Love Will Decide Everything," *America*, 12 Nov 2007, 19.
[26] Cited in Ibid., 20.
[27] Rather than 'radically new ways", this was an attempt to re-assert the Ignatian vision of pedagogy – to help the learner find God in all things and from there to announce the Good News to the poor and the powerful.

they should."[28] This led to the educational commitment that learning well and reaching for high standards in any activity or discipline of learning one undertakes reveals the presence of God - a watershed at a time that considered the secular to be utterly separate from the sacred. Meaning can be found and God glorified in whatever one studies, indeed in whatever work or activity one undertakes. This attitude convinced the early Jesuits to study all the disciplines of learning and to prepare people for all the professions.

2.2 The primacy of personal experience and *cura personalis*

Ignatius felt that he, an unworthy sinner in his own eyes, had been taught by God. Because he could not fathom why God would single him out, he came to the conviction that God is calling everyone to intimacy, no matter who they are or what their state in life. This mystical element applies to the learning process. In his autobiography, he talks of being taught by God, just as a schoolmaster deals with a child. This gave rise to the primacy of personal experience in the *Exercises*; the guide was never to interfere or direct, but should allow God to deal with the retreatant.

Cura personalis as it came to be known is a distinctive feature of Ignatian spirituality - prioritizing care of the person. Thus, the central focus of the enterprise of education is the human person; it insists on personal care and concern for each one.

2.3 The *Magis*

Ignatius realized that we never come to a point complete of holiness where our lives fully give God glory; there is always room for improvement, something more we

[28] Gerard Manley Hopkins, quoted in Angela Partington, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, 4rth ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 346.

can do. Reaching for the *magis* or 'the more' in education translates as setting high standards, including intellectual rigor and holistic development. The transformation begun in authentic learning – finding God in all things – is always incomplete.[29]

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam grounds the *magis*. The pursuit of academic excellence is appropriate in a Jesuit schools, but only within the larger context of human excellence. 'More' does not imply measurement against an absolute standard, nor comparison with others. Rather it is the fullest possible development of every person's gifts at each stage of life, and the motivation to use these gifts for others. Whereas the stimulus of competition is traditionally valued in Jesuit schools, it must not be at the expense of sensitivity or commitment to service to others. We are to reach for 'the more' only to give greater glory to God, not for personal aggrandizement.

By insisting on the notion of the *magis*, Ignatius demands that educational expectation should go beyond the mastery of skills and understanding. A well-informed person is not necessarily giving God glory; *magis* implies action. Jesuits are encouraged in their training to explore expressions and dimensions of Christian service in order to develop a spirit of generosity. By weaving this element of Ignatian vision into programs of service in schools, students are encouraged to actively experience and test their acceptance of the *magis*, and thus discover the mutually enriching dialectic of action and contemplation.

2.4 Discernment

In sum, discernment is the finely tuned reading of oneself and one's culture in the Spirit of God to recognize in any given situation what helps the coming of God's reign

[29] Cf. Dewey's notion of the continuous transformation of experience. See John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997, c1938).

and what hinders it; this is pivotal as a means of discovering God's will. In Ignatian spirituality, discernment is about making choices, not between good and evil, but between options all of which are potentially good. This process involves reflection, prayer and consultation with trusted others, and paying close attention to rational argument and feelings, desires, and emotions ('movements of the spirit'). Central to discernment is attention to consolation – feelings of peace, joy, and deeds of loving service, and on the other hand, desolation – agitation, restlessness, discouragement, and fear. Such feelings of desolation alert us that we are not following the better path, leading the good life, the way of God.[30]

Discerners learn to be wary of idolizing anyone or anything, and are therefore less likely to become disillusioned with themselves, with others, or with human history for all its personal and social evil. They learn to place their hope in God, the supreme Reality of love and self-giving. The reflection on experience, weighing the evidence (good or bad, consolation or desolation) led to the educational commitment to critical thought and rigorous analysis, blended with a kind of spiritual aesthetics that seeks the good as well as the truth.

The fruits of ongoing engagement in discernment are, among others, adaptability and openness. The ability to be adaptable and open to growth depends on 'detachment'– freedom from false attachments. Detachment, (known sometimes as 'indifference'), means avoiding undue attachments and encouraging a balanced attitude toward worldly goods. In many ways it acts as a balance or buffer for an over-enthusiastic sense of magis - striving for excellence regardless of the costs.

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[30] George W. Traub, *Do You Speak Ignatian? A Glossary of Terms Used in Ignatian and Jesuit Circles*, 8th ed. (Cincinnati: Xavier University, 2004).

2.5 Faith that does justice

Ignatius asked for the total and active commitment of men and women "to imitate Christ our Lord better and to be more like him here and now."[31] This means putting their ideals into practice in the real world. The final part of the *Spiritual Exercises* involves the "Contemplation to Attain Love." The blessings of creation and redemption are recalled so that the exercitant can recognize the Giver in the gift. The desired response is to return love through actions as well as words. The *Characteristics of Jesuit Education* paraphrases from the *Exercises* - "love is shown in deeds"[32] - to describe how the free human response to the redeeming love of God can be shown through an active life of service. Jesuit philosophy argues that love of God which does not issue in love of neighbor and the work of justice is a fraud.[33] Therefore, the curriculum in a Jesuit school includes a critical analysis of society with a view to its reform toward justice. It gives counter witness to the dehumanizing values of the consumer society such as the cynical view in Arthur Miller's *The Price*: "The car, the furniture, the wife, the children – everything has to be disposable. Because you see the main thing today is – shopping."[34] Talents are gifts to be developed for the good of the community, with particular concern for the poor.

Spirituality and ministry were two sides of the same coin in the early Jesuit treasury. Ignatius refers time and again in his writings to the essential mandate of "helping souls". This mandate is broadened explicitly today in the language of social

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[31] Ignatius Loyola, "The Spiritual Exercises," in *Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works*, ed. George E. Ganss (New York: Paulist Press, 1991), #167.
[32] Ibid., #230.
[33] Pedro Arrupe S.J., "Men for Others (1974)," in *Foundations*, ed. Carl E. Meirose (Washington DC: JSEA, 1994), 32.
[34] Arthur Miller, *Arthur Miller's Collected Plays Volume Ii* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1981), 323.

justice. A contemporary summary phrase used by the Society of Jesus is "educating men and women for others".

Faith that does justice has become a central tenet of contemporary Jesuit philosophy since Fr Arrupe captured the imagination of the Society with this priority in the 1970s. Arrupe's address to the Tenth International congress of Jesuit Alumni of Europe in Valencia, Spain on July 31, 1973 caused a stir because it insisted on change.

> Today our prime educational objective must be to form [people] for others; [people] who will live not for themselves but for God and his Christ – for the God-human who lived and died for all the world; [people] who cannot even conceive of love of God which does not include love for the least of their neighbors; [people] completely convinced that love of God which does not issue in justice for others is a farce.[35]

The Characteristics of Jesuit Education reflects this philosophy, with its emphasis on "faith that does justice," forming "men and women for others," its affirmation of the world, and goal of promoting "dialogue between faith and culture."[36]

2.6 Summary

The Ignatian vision sees life and the whole universe as gift, calling for wonder and gratitude; it allows scope for the intellectual, affective, and behavioral nature of the person; it seeks the highest standards in all aspects of learning – formal and informal – because the divine is found in all things and all things done well give glory to God. Further, it cultivates critical awareness of personal and social evil, pointing to God's love as more powerful than any evil; it stresses freedom, discernment, and responsible action,

[35] Carl E. SJ Meirose, ed., *Foundations* (Washington DC: JSEA, 1994), 32.
[36] (ICAJE) International Commission on the Apostolate of Jesuit Education, "The Characteristics of Jesuit Education, 1986," in *The Jesuit Ratio Studiorum: 400th Anniversary Perspectives*, ed. Vincent J. Duminuco S.J. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), 175-192.

and it empowers people to become leaders in service to others, building a more loving, just, and humane world.

3. The spiritual heritage of Jesuit education: The beginnings

The first Jesuit institute for education, the *Collegio di San Nicolo*, opened at Messina, Sicily in 1548. By the time the *Collegio Romano* was established in 1551, the Jesuits were inaugurating schools at the rate of four or five a year, partly in response to the demand from lay people, and partly as a way to pay for the training of their own members. Polanco's[37] letter of 1560 explicitly recognizes that the schools had become a kind of super-ministry.[38] But the beginning of Jesuit education predates the formal opening of schools. It began as far back as the Barcelona period of 1524 when Ignatius first began to give the *Spiritual Exercises*, and the foundations go back even further to Ignatius' own learning experiences during his depression at Manresa.[39]

3.1 Ignatius: Student and teacher

His time at Manresa taught Ignatius that God was dealing with him "just as a schoolmaster treats a child whom he is teaching."[40] In his autobiography Ignatius cites five instances of divine tutelage culminating in the illumination on the banks of the river

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[37] Juan Alfonso de Polanco (1516-1576), a native of Burgos, became secretary to Ignatius in 1547. According to Tellechea Idígoras, this appointment was of capital importance, because Polanco understood the mind of Ignatius perfectly. See Tellechea Idígoras, *Ignatius of Loyola: The Pilgrim Saint*, 517.

[38] O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 200.

[39] Leaving Montserrat intent on Jerusalem, Ignatius broke his journey in Manresa. The few days (which turned into 11 months) at Manresa was a crucial interlude and left an indelible mark on Ignatius – the notes he jotted there became the skeleton of the *Spiritual Exercises*. Tellechea Idigoras asserts that this was the point when Ignatius clearly saw himself as a pilgrim, took a vow of poverty, and made himself alien to the familiar props and features of the life that went before. It was also the period during which Ignatius was tormented by scruples and a disgust for his life and himself, a period Tellechea Idigoras describes as one of depression. See Tellechea Idígoras, *Ignatius of Loyola: The Pilgrim Saint*, Part II: Chapter 4.

[40] Ignatius Loyola, *The Autobiography of St Ignatius of Loyola*, trans. Joseph O'Callaghan (New York: Fordham, 1992), 37.

Cardoner. The resulting transformation in Ignatius allowed him to see God in all things, and the world as a source of vocation and knowledge.[41] Further, the exercise of discernment begun at Loyola was becoming a habit of heart. Manresa symbolizes the foundation of Ignatian education.[42]

From these experiences of divine intervention, Ignatius came to understand the universality of God's desire to communicate personally with people, engage their histories with a new interpretation, reorient their imaginations with new possibilities and redirect their talents and opportunities toward new enterprises.[43] He constructed a system of prayer and reflection that would help people of good will to recognize the movement of God's Spirit in their lives, how best to respond, and how this grace would enable them to find God in all things. This system forms the basis of his *Spiritual Exercises.*

It is well known that formal institutes of education were far from Ignatius' vision for the new Society of Jesus. Yet education was the driving force behind it. Through giving the *Spiritual Exercises* and "helping souls", educating people toward the real joy of relationship with God and discovery of God's will in their lives was what Ignatius and subsequently the first Jesuits were all about. In other words, Ignatius was, at heart, a teacher. He rarely missed an opportunity to enter into a teaching/learning moment:

> Ever since Manresa, the pilgrim had the habit when he ate with anyone not to speak at the table except to answer briefly; but he listened to what was said and noted some things which he took as the occasion to speak about God. And when the meal was finished, he did so.[44]

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[41] This can be viewed as a type of blending of creation theology and redemption theology embedded in the mystical spirituality of Ignatius.
[42] Howard J. Gray S.J., "The Experience of Ignatius Loyola: Background to Jesuit Education," in *The Jesuit Ratio Studiorum: 400th Anniversary Perspectives*, ed. Vincent J. Duminuco S.J. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), 6.
[43] Ibid., 4.
[44] Loyola, *The Autobiography of St Ignatius of Loyola*, 48.

The themes he tried to impart are foundational to his spirituality: recognition of the movements of spirits – good and bad – and feelings of consolation or desolation to perceive the way forward, with the ultimate goal of helping souls.

The bedrock of the ministry of education was the same as that of every other Jesuit ministry - the extraordinary effect of the *Spiritual Exercises*, their use for discerning vocation and 'our way of proceeding', and their intrinsic expression in ministry to those who needed it most – the poor, the sick, the abandoned members of sixteenth century society.[45]

3.2 The nature and purpose of Jesuit education

While it is true that the nature and purpose of early Jesuit education was influenced by the humanist movement of Renaissance Europe, it is rooted in the spirituality of Ignatius. The key theme in the humanist movement was the centrality of the human person –it valued the intellect, imagination, freedom, and dignity of human beings and their capacity to learn and improve their whole cultural situation. The rediscovery of learning from the ancient Greek and Roman world inspired Renaissance humanism. Largely oriented towards Church reform, the humanists played a major role in the rise of critical biblical studies and the careful reading of patristic literature.[46] The humanists were especially vociferous about the failure of university (scholastic) education to relate learning to a life of virtue and public service. The early Jesuits adopted humanism because, like their contemporaries, they believed that humanistic studies both helped students discover God in all things, and resulted in upright character

[45] It is one of the great ironies of history that the Jesuits very quickly found their educational endeavors focused on the sons of the wealthy.
[46] Lawrence S. Cunningham, "Humanism," in *The New Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Jospeh A. Komanchak, Mary Collins, and Dermot A. Lane (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1987).

(*pietas).* They too believed in the centrality of the person in the learning process, as evident from their emphasis on the teacher-student relationship and conviction that human meaning can be gleaned and appropriated from whatever one studies – all giving glory to God.

Scholasticism was the second great educational tradition of Ignatius' time – an "academic and monastic tradition that used Aristotelian and Platonic philosophy to understand, interpret systematically, and speculate about the truths of faith."[47] It is traced from Augustine of Hippo (354-430) to Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) and his maxim of *fides quarens intellectum* (faith seeking understanding). Jesuit schools were scholastic friendly; for instance, the academic program at Messina included theology and cases of conscience, not disciplines in a strictly humanist curriculum.[48]

We have seen, however, how the nature and purpose of Jesuit education are most deeply rooted in Ignatian spirituality since those start-up days of the sixteenth century. What made the Jesuits distinctive as a teaching order (and it caused Ignatius and companions a lot of trouble) was this: God was to be sought, found, and contemplated in all their apostolic activities, including education, and in all the academic disciplines thereof. LaCroix reminds us that earlier groups considered these works as the fruits or consequences of their contacts with God in prayer.[49] The examen was a self-check to ensure that the new spiritual ideal to seek God in all good human activities, specifically in a ministry devoted to formal learning, was more than just a sterile aspiration.

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[47] Gerald O'Collins S.J. and Edward G. Farrugia S.J., *A Concise Dictionary of Theology: Revised and Expanded Edition* (New York: Paulist Press, 2000), 236.
[48] O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 208-209.
[49] LaCroix S.J., *The Jesuit Spirit of Education: Ignatius, Tradition, and Today's Questions*, 14.

The spirituality of the *Exercises* was transferred as part and parcel of education. Consolation was a theme in the colleges from the entrance interview.[50] Older students were expected to give good example to younger ones, and talk to them about the spiritual life. At one point it was even noted that "this method of helping the laity by means of the laity results in good success when it is done well, and they generally accomplish more than [the] religious."[51] Concern for the well-being of students was supposed to be manifested in the classroom. Education commissary Jeronimo Nadal[52] repeatedly urged teachers to find *pietas* in all the authors and subjects studied and to draw out the spiritual meanings deep in the texts, for instance the finding of God in learning about the world - as God's ongoing creation. O'Malley reminds us that Jesuit teachers were themselves very well educated and tried to influence their students as much by their actions as their words.[53]

3.3 The early years, up to and including the publication of the *Ratio Studiorum* of 1599

The exponential success of the early Jesuit educational venture soon brought a host of unforeseen problems. By 1553, there was a crisis in manpower, some schools were experiencing major discipline problems, there were difficulties over who was to administer corporal punishment (Ignatius expressly forbade any Jesuit to do it), and some towns resented the Jesuits and their schools. In Modena, for instance, the town had

[50] O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 220.
[51] Michele Laurentano S.J., quoted in Ibid., 221.
[52] Jeronimo Nadal (1507-1580) was assigned to explain and promulgate whatever Ignatius was working on, particularly the *Constitutions*, to all the provinces. He played a major role as interpreter of Ignatian spirit, and was named vicar-general in 1554.
[53] O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 226-227.

plenty of schoolmasters, and the Jesuit teachers were not Italian.[54] As a result, schools began to close. In an attempt to rectify the situation, the Second General Congregation decreed a drastic slowdown in the opening of new schools. They also decided on the employment of "commissaries" such as Jeronimo Nadal to give order and method to the schools. But order and method had to be formally worked out and written down to guarantee continuity not only between the colleges, but between one generation of Jesuit educators and the next. Although the process goes back to 1541 with the *Fundacion de Collegio* - a draft of an order of studies for Jesuit scholastics - a formal *Ratio Studiorum* was not issued until 1586. This was further revised before the definitive version was finally published in 1599.

The *Ratio* of 1599 is a collection of thirty sets of rules for the "higher" and "lower" classes, various offices, pedagogies, and graduated progression in Jesuit schools.[55] Ignatian spirituality frames the *Ratio* from the opening statement: education is one of the principle ministries of the Society of Jesus and the aim of educational programs is to lead people to loving relationship with God.[56] Again, this emphasizes the connection of the mystical with formal learning. Since God is in all things, the study and understanding of every discipline is a way to know and love God, and this demands a human response. Gaining knowledge can never be separated from the larger goal of acting well in the world.

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[54] Ibid., 227-231.
[55] LaCroix S.J., *The Jesuit Spirit of Education: Ignatius, Tradition, and Today's Questions*, 60.
[56] Claude Pavur SJ, ed., *The Ratio Studiorum: The Official Plan for Jesuit Education* (St Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2005), #7, 7.

These themes find resonance in the *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus,*[57] composed by Ignatius mainly during the last nine years of his life, and published in 1558, two years after his death.[58] Howard Gray holds up many aspects of the *Constitutions* that are both deeply rooted in Ignatian spirituality and fundamental to a Jesuit education.[59] These include the formation environment, the importance of modeling and good example, and the centrality of the *Spiritual Exercises*, pilgrimages, and service.[60] Significantly, both the *Constitutions* and the *Ratio Studiorum* reverberate with the caveat of adaptation. The 'rules' are in fact guidelines, to be adapted to local circumstance.

Robert Newton writes that whereas *The Constitutions* and *Ratio* are concerned with practical decisions and procedures rather than statements of values or principles, it is the spirit of the *Exercises* that animates, and, through the experience it provides, gives the value structure for these more practical educational documents.[61] For instance, the *Ratio* urges that personal dignity be communicated to students as the prime value.[62] Practice and reinforcement of ideals and virtues takes place both in the classroom and multiple extra-curricular activities. The example of teachers is paramount; the *Ratio* assumes that teachers themselves live well-balanced lives of natural and religious virtue.[63] Of course,

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[57] See for instance Const., #307

[58] Ganss in Ignatius Loyola, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, trans. George E. Ganss (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1970), 3. The translation of *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus* by George E. Ganss S.J., with introduction, commentary, and meticulous footnotes, appears to be the definitive work on this subject. I will refer to the observations of Ganss from time to time.

[59] Gray S.J., "The Experience of Ignatius Loyola: Background to Jesuit Education.", "The Experience of Ignatius Loyola: Background to Jesuit Education."

[60] Tellechea Idígoras too lifts up these latter features, because they were a fundamental part of the formation of new Jesuits. Novices underwent a three month probationary period for new candidates during which time they would make the *Spiritual Exercises*, go on a pilgrimage and help in hospitals 422. Many of the aspects Gray highlights are incorporated into practices suggested for sustaining a spiritual pedagogy. See chapter 5.

[61] Robert R. Newton, "Reflections on the Educational Principles of the *Spiritual Exercises* (1977)," in *Foundations*, ed. Carl E. Meirose (Washington DC: JSEA, 1994), 99.

[62] See also the *Constitutions*, e.g. #31-34.

[63] LaCroix S.J., *The Jesuit Spirit of Education: Ignatius, Tradition, and Today's Questions*, 62.

for a long time all the teachers in Jesuit schools were themselves Jesuit, and in sixteenth century Europe there was no reason to think that this situation might change.

However, even as the commission of six Jesuits from various provinces collaborated on writing the *Ratio Studiorum*, the schools were forcing change on the Society. The most important change was the degree and way its members, by force of their vocation as teachers of the humanities and of 'natural philosophy", had to engage with culture beyond the traditional clerical subjects. This was a significant departure from the teaching conducted by other religious orders of the time; for instance, the Constitutions of the Dominicans forbade their students to engage in secular sciences, except by dispensation.[64] The Jesuits had a spiritual foundation to do so – because God can be encountered in all things, all good human pursuits reveal and give glory to God.

As institutions of civic influence, the schools gave the Jesuits access to public life that their churches alone could never provide. Their modest start to engagement with secular culture (not uncritical, but generally welcoming of it) became a hallmark of the Society – they began to see themselves as having a cultural as well as a religious mission. O'Malley asserts that their vision correlated with that of Thomistic theology to find as much harmony as possible between 'nature and grace', a vision captured throughout the *Constitutions,* and grounded in the *Exercises'* principle of seeing God in all things.[65]

With the hindsight of over four hundred years, O'Malley lifts up the *Spiritual Exercises* and the schools as the two most important factors that shaped the distinctive character of the Society of Jesus. However, in explaining the essence of the Society,

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[64] O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 241.
[65] John W. O'Malley, "Some Distinctive Characteristics of Jesuit Spirituality in the Sixteenth Century," in *Jesuit Spirituality: A Now and Future Resource*, ed. John W. O'Malley, John W. Padberg, and Vincent T. O'Keefe (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1990), 10.

O'Malley insists that one characteristic was fundamental. Almost hidden away in the fifteenth preliminary observation,[66] it was the undisputed cornerstone, highlighting the mystical quality of Ignatian spirituality, which grounded the apostolic spirituality of educating:

> the Creator deals directly with the creature, and the creature deals directly with the Creator – heart to heart, one might say. Upon this teaching Jesuits based their more characteristic themes – indifference, discernment, and inner devotion, or consolation.[67]

4. The spiritual heritage of Jesuit education: Today

4.1 Some contemporary Jesuit writings

Ignatius saw education as an effective means of attaining the overall end of the Society – the spiritual, human flourishing of people so that they would promote the same in others and thus leaven society with the spirit of Jesus Christ - what Wilfred La Croix terms the "multiplier" effect.[68] This theme infuses the *Constitutions*[69] and remains prominent today. Former Superior General Peter Hans Kolvenbach describes the ultimate aim of Jesuit education as "that full growth of the person which leads to action – action, especially, that is suffused with the spirit and presence of Jesus Christ, the son of God the Man-for-Others."[70] Training capable leaders to take their place in the social order has always been a characteristic of the Jesuit philosophy of education.[71]

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[66] The *Exercises* proper are preceded by twenty preliminary observations. These are introductory explanations written by Ignatius to help both the guide and the retreatant to understand the *Exercises*.
[67] O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 373.
[68] LaCroix S.J., *The Jesuit Spirit of Education: Ignatius, Tradition, and Today's Questions*, 40.
[69] See for instance, #440, # 307, #351, #446.
[70] Kolvenbach quoted in (ICAJE) International Commission on the Apostolate of Jesuit Education, "Ignatian Pedagogy: A Practical Approach, 1993," in *The Jesuit Ratio Studiorum: 400th Anniversary Perspectives*, ed. Vincent J. Duminuco S.J. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), 240. Indeed, even the contemporary summary phrase "educating men and women for others" used since the 1970s, is evolving as the Society reads the 'signs of the times'. As a result of the 34th General Congregation and the realization of the real blessing of more laypersons in their ministries, the Jesuits re-articulated their

Further, the early Jesuits were convinced that formal schooling was good for society at large – their schools should contribute toward the common good; in fact this was critical to why they founded them. Therefore, justice remains a core theme in a contemporary Jesuit philosophy of education. Pedro Arrupe emphasized the connection between education and justice and articulated three attitudes to be brought home to students: respect for all persons, never to profit from positions of power, and an attitude not simply of refusal, but of counterattack against injustice.[72]

Jesuit education is broader than formal schooling; its focus is wider than the school-going student body. It would be a very limited vision to confine the richness and expansiveness of Jesuit education, bound as it is with Ignatian spirituality, to a system of schools. Indeed, the schools and residences attached were never supposed to restrict themselves to formal schooling. Preaching, giving the *Exercises* and evangelization were all extensions of the Jesuit apostolate in education.[73] The Jesuits founded colleges to be centers of influence for all socio-cultural activities rather than mere teaching establishments. Tellechea Idígoras explains how Ignatius and company had the knack of going into the very heart of people and their cultures. They encouraged the laity to get involved in faith activities never before considered- as individuals or on a corporate basis; for instance, the Company of Charity was a confraternity of laymen founded to

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apostolic focus from "men and women for others" to "men and women for and with others". This extension celebrates the role lay people play in all kinds of vocations and asks Jesuits today "to have the attitude, the readiness, to cooperate, to listen, and to learn from others. It is in this way only that we will share our spiritual and apostolic tradition." See Peter-Hans Kolvenbach SJ, "Jesuits and Their Lay Partners in Ministry," *Origins* 34, no. 20 (October 2004): 316-318.

[71] Ganss in Loyola, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, 210-211.

[72] Arrupe S.J., "Men for Others (1974)," 39.

[73] James Mohler S.J., *The School of Jesus: An Overview of Christian Education Yesterday and Today* (New York: Alba House, 1973), 180.

attend to the sick.[74] In other words, service into society was a central theme in the early schools, as it is today by means of social outreach programs and teaching for a 'faith that does justice.'

Kolvenbach also emphasizes the intrinsic relationship between education and culture as rooted in Ignatian spirituality. In his guidelines to Jesuit and lay teachers, Kolvenbach reminds us that no aspect of education is neutral; all teaching transmits values.[75] In other words, the activity of teaching is constantly promoting values of some kind, whether by design or default. Like LaCroix, Kolvenbach also sees the spiritual root of this humanism in the final Contemplation of the *Exercises*. Ignatius' understanding of God's relation to the world implies that faith in God and affirmation of all that is truly human go hand in hand.

Howard Gray asserts that although the *Spiritual Exercises* have sometimes been criticized as too individualistic, they are in fact relentlessly oriented toward helping others and contributing to public life. They prove their validity when they empower us to help others. He agrees that as an educational inspiration, the *Exercises* remain a remarkable tool of engagement with the world and culture of one's times.[76] Such engagement is not always easy; Mohler for instance argues that whereas the widely available public education of North America today is largely secular, there is still need for integration "encompassing both the sacred and the secular", helping students toward

[74] Tellechea Idigoras, *Ignatius of Loyola: The Pilgrim Saint*, 490.
[75] I have already mentioned how teacher educators such as Nieto and Cochran Smith make the same point. See chapter 1.
[76] Gray S.J., "The Experience of Ignatius Loyola: Background to Jesuit Education."

their own life synthesis.[77] This is a challenge I bear in mind when crafting a spiritual pedagogy in chapter 4.

4.2 The relevance of Ignatian spirituality for educators

Ignatian spirituality is a real attempt to figure out how persons can forge an authentic identity and relationship with God which would last wherever they might find themselves, whatever vocation they might undertake - alone, with one other, or connected to a communal institution such as a school or university. Our context has changed; it is fraught with difficulties no less than those of sixteenth century Europe, but it is imbued with equally rich opportunities. In a Europe that is largely hostile to organized religion, or an American public school system that outlaws it, the human heart still yearns for spiritual direction. There can be little doubt that the gift of Ignatian spirituality can still be significant for educators today.

Ignatian spirituality recognizes the critical role of teachers and educational leaders, hence the 'rules' in the *Ratio* for every teaching office. Teachers are a central resource and their spiritual lives must be prioritized. But this makes support and formation programs for teachers critical. From an Ignatian perspective, teachers' own spiritual health and that of those they educate to go hand in hand. *Nemo dat quod non habet*: "no one gives what he does not have" was an old maxim much favored in Jesuit novitiates.[78]

O'Malley asserts that the first companions looked for the qualities of prudence and sound judgment in candidates. In practice this meant people who were flexible and could deal with others in "tender fashion" rather than rigid, "wanting to control others by

[77] Mohler S.J., *The School of Jesus: An Overview of Christian Education Yesterday and Today*, 189.
[78] Barry and Doherty, *Contemplatives in Action: The Jesuit Way*, see chapter 4.

instilling a servile fear."[79] Education, wherever it takes place, is fundamentally a vocation of "caring for souls", including the souls of teachers. In the absence of general guidelines for schools, prefect of studies at the *Collegio Romano* Ledesma bemoaned in the 1560s, "not only will studies fail, but certain of the teachers . . . will be shocked or troubled or will make bad decisions or will lose heart."[80] Ledesma was concerned with keeping teachers engaged and alive to their work; he predicted disillusionment and apathy if teachers see that their requests or proposals, often reiterated, are subject to change or not met at all. His sixteenth century anxiety is resonant with today; teachers still need a supportive school environment in order to sustain their vocation.

Ignatian spirituality sees teachers not only as educators but "formators", facilitated by that bond between themselves and their students. This bond was and still is frequently noticed and commented on by new arrivals to Jesuit schools. For instance, William C. Fogarty was sufficiently impressed by the student-teacher relationship as a feature of Jesuit education to consider it worthy of written comment. Fogarty was a teacher in Belvedere College (a Jesuit secondary school for boys in Dublin since 1832) for twenty-five years from 1909. On his arrival from a teaching position in the Channel Islands, he was struck by the confidence placed in the teachers, not only by the Jesuit community, but also by the boys, and by the relationships between them.[81] Jesuit schools provide professional training and learning experiences for the various partners in schools, especially teachers.

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[79] Francis Xavier quoted by O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 81.
[80] Ledesma quoted in John W. Padberg, "Development of the Ratio Studiorum," in *The Jesuit Ratio Studiorum: 400th Anniversary Perspectives*, ed. Vincent J. Duminuco S.J. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), 83.
[81] William C. Fogarty, "Twenty-Five Years in Belvedere," in *Portraits*, ed. John Bowman & Ronan O'Donoghue (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1982). *Portraits* was compiled to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Belvedere College, Dublin. It is a collection of works, memoirs, and photographs from members of the school community, past and present.

5. Ignatian spirituality – some critiques

5.1 Favor in high places

As the early Jesuits grew more influential and became known in circles of power, the essence of their charism was sometimes forgotten. It was easy to explain away personal favors from wealthy and powerful benefactors, while forgetting that such favor and good standing was never meant for one's own gain or satisfaction, but to help the weakest and most needy in society. Favor from high places was simply meant to smooth this path. Actions or policies that ran counter to this goal should have been the subject of reform.

O'Malley reminds us that the ruling elite stood for order and stability and the Jesuits resonated with these values.

> The *Constitutions* taught, moreover, that greater good was achieved by influencing those in a position to influence others. As they became dependent on the wealthy and powerful for school endowments, the Jesuits struck alliances. They did not always see how such alliances might in the short or long run compromise them.[82]

Because the schools were mostly endowed by and catered to the social elite, from time to time they too were compromised. Excellence gained from a Jesuit education used for one's own benefit to the neglect of others is a mutation of Ignatian spirituality. The gifts of good education were always to be for the benefit of society, particularly those that needed them most. George Aschenbrenner describes four contemporary deceptions that can mislead an Ignatian spirituality when this foundation is lacking:

a) A healthy self-care corrupts and fixates into a person's whole life enterprise;

[82] O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 72.

b) Education for mature responsibility can mutate into an autonomous rugged individualism;

c) A deep-hearted desire to be like God can twist into a desire to *be* God; and

d) Education for Christian service can be distorted by a self-protective misuse of power.[83]

However, the range of people and situations, including many of the poor and outcast, the first Jesuits ministered to is striking. They were not pastors and could not oblige people to accept their ministries. Those that came to them did so of their own free will. Arrupe warns against over-reacting to the critique of influence in high places, and against the temptation to well-intentioned but ineffective counter-measures:

> Stepping down from our posts of power would be too simple a course of action . . . ordinarily it merely serves to hand over the entire social structure to the exploitation of the egotistical.[84]

Instead, he argues for bridge building among alumni and alumni associations to foster mutual understanding and constructive conversation, especially with those from the working class. Such discourse is essential because it can examine, affirm, and challenge the vision and actions of those within the Society's institutions, particularly those in positions of power.

5.2 Women and the *Spiritual Exercises*

Many authors, including Jesuits such as David Lonsdale, have critiqued the theological frameworks, language, and images in the *Spiritual Exercises*. For Lonsdale,

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[83] George Aschenbrenner, S.J., "Response to Howard Gray, S.J.," in *The Jesuit Ratio Studiorum: 400th Anniversary Perspectives*, ed. Vincent J. Duminuco S.J. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), 27.
[84] Arrupe S.J., "Men for Others (1974)," 39.

these present a danger most palpable for women making the *Exercises*. In order to represent women who have lived in situations where their experiences have been ignored, Dyckman, Garvin, and Liebert feel the need to reclaim the *Spiritual Exercises* from a feminist perspective. Situations where women's experiences have and continue in some measure to remain "invisible" are for them, highly problematic, and a marked hindrance to women fully entering and exploring the liberating possibilities of the *Spiritual Exercises*. The authors attempt to address the problem that the *Spiritual Exercises* are inhibiting to many women because of their almost exclusively masculine origins and images. The authors outline four significant conclusions which in many ways provide the warrant for their work of reclaiming the *Exercises*, so it is worth noting them here.

First, the history of the *Spiritual Exercises* demonstrates that women's relationships with Ignatius and his group vividly reveal "the presence and power of God laboring in the worlds of women through their spiritual conversation and apostolic action."[85] Next, this revelation suggests that women's desires and actions can no longer be ignored in any movement toward social transformation for the Reign of God. A third conclusion suggests that the *Spiritual Exercises* have the potential to maintain the status quo or to liberate for new possibilities. When women and their experiences are taken seriously, they too can actualize the fruits of the *Exercises*, such as the ability to discern "the greater good" among a variety of goods, freedom from false attachments, and empowerment to help both themselves and others. Finally, Ignatius was a man of his time and tended to limit women's potential by accepting the cultural gender stereotypes. This raises the need for healthy critique of those images: "When responding to the graces

[85] Katherine Dyckman, Mary Garvin, and Liebert Elizabeth, *The Spiritual Exercises Reclaimed: Uncovering the Liberating Possibilities for Women* (New York: Paulist Press, 2001), 44.

of the Spiritual Exercises, neither the culture nor the society nor even the church can contain where or to what the Spirit is calling women."[86]

Dyckman, Garvin, and Liebert expose some of the pastoral problems arising from a heritage that is couched in language and metaphors of a time past; a time that was less appreciative and in many respects damaging to women. Yet they have also reviewed some possibilities and suggestions. It is important to remember that the language and images Ignatius uses are the product of his own experiences, background, understanding, and historical context. Rather than abandon the *Exercises,* Lonsdale is encouraged by how the Ignatian community holds out the constant invitation to engage in the creative enterprise of re-reading and reinterpreting the *Exercises* and their theology, images, and language from emancipatory points of view. From a feminist perspective, all historical documents must be critically re-appropriated. The challenge for those with designated roles within the Jesuit tradition is to hold it up, to critique, to work toward reform, and further, to invite others into the *Spiritual Exercises* in ways that continue to hold out opportunities that are truly transformative for persons and society.

5.3 Inculturation

Lonsdale fears that although the Ignatian community has found the freedom to re-fashion original symbols in response to the needs of a contemporary culture, that culture is largely European and North American (what he terms North Atlantic). Whereas Ignatian spirituality has been exported to parts of Asia, the Philippines, Africa, and Latin America with obvious benefits to the Christian communities there, it presupposes a very different cultural setting. This has many dangers including the risk of becoming another

[86] Ibid., 47.

form of Western Christian imperialism, and not addressing the real and pressing needs of the local peoples.

> There is room . . . for a critical evaluation of the contemporary 'North Atlantic' account of Ignatian spirituality from the standpoint of African, Asian, Latin American and other cultural systems, preferably by scholars and practitioners who are indigenous to those cultures.[87]

He proposes using local images and stories in place of the images Ignatius proposes in some of the *Exercises*, particularly those with military and monarchical overtones.[88]

5.4 Obedience to the Church

In addition to the dominance of masculine language and images, and the challenge of inculturation, another problem associated with the *Exercises* is the "Rules for thinking . . . with the Church."[89] Tellechea Idígoras questions, as have many others, why Ignatius remained so loyal to Roman Church practices and structures in the face of Lutheran rejection and the criticism of Erasmus.[90] He decides that it was quite simply because of his faith in Jesus Christ, in his desire to perpetuate His "true spouse", in the manifest and ever-active presence of the Holy Spirit.[91] In other words the Romanism so characteristic of the Society of Jesus is not the end product of ambition but of the will to serve the Church in the world.

I find Tellechea Idígoras' answer too simplistic. In order to gain some insight into the mind of Ignatius, we must insert ourselves into his context and try to understand the early Jesuits as they understood themselves. In 1533 Ignatius received his Licentiate

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[87] Lonsdale, *Eyes to See, Ears to Hear: An Introduction to Ignatian Spirituality*, 222.
[88] Lonsdale advises this local adaptation particularly in the Meditation on the Two Standards or the Call of the King.
[89] *Spiritual Exercises* #353-370.
[90] Tellechea Idigoras, *Ignatius of Loyola: The Pilgrim Saint*, 333.
[91] Ibid., 336.

in Arts. In that same year, Henry VIII married Anne Boleyn, marking the break of the thousand-year old link between England and Rome, Paris was once again victimized by the plague, and Calvin returned to Paris, lodging near Sainte Barbe. Virulent anti-Protestant measures to quell the arising storm were passed by the French Parliament and Francis I. Any one of these events would have been enough to severely shake the common trust in the old order; together they represent a seismic blow. Ignatius was not blind to these lightning surges. Indeed, like Erasmus and Luther, he was provoked into a radical response. The difference is that he preferred to stand in solidarity with rather than in opposition to the existing Church. In other words, Ignatius sought to reform from within, sustained by his faith in the presence of the Holy Spirit to the Church. Loyalty to the Church (rather than to the hierarchy) becomes and remains a characteristic feature of the Society of Jesus.

Conclusion

Ignatian spirituality provides a rich resource from which to craft a spiritual pedagogy to sustain the vocation of teachers. A spiritual pedagogy will necessarily evoke tensions, but dealing well with tension can have very positive results, as the history of the Jesuits in education can demonstrate. The flux of creative tension can keep us on our toes, so to speak, and prevent us from sliding into indifference, one-sidedness, or complacency.

Tensions in the translation of their spirituality to corporal works produced a cumulative character for the early Jesuits:[92] itinerant ministers become resident schoolteachers; their ministry of internal consolation was tempered with the overlay of a

[92] See for instance Barry and Doherty, *Contemplatives in Action: The Jesuit Way*.

confessional orthodoxy. The first Jesuits had to reconcile direct action of God with the discipline and order necessary to institutional living. They wanted to be independent in their ministries, working without recompense, but soon found themselves beholden to wealthy and powerful benefactors and dependent on the goodwill of church and civil authorities. Nonetheless, the Society held fast to certain life-giving assumptions about God, human beings, and the world, and the interrelationships among them, which remain basic to Ignatian spirituality and its realization in what became its most significant ministry - education.[93]

In sum, Jesuit education went far beyond instruction for the mind. "Although the mind may need instruction, the heart needed still more to be warmed, healed, and eventually turned to the needs of one's neighbor."[94] The purpose of the colleges was not apologetic, much less polemic; rather it was a way to provide their own with adequate education using a formula that would ensure adequate funding. But the early Jesuits became convinced that lay people would derive the same benefits from a program of study and devout practices as they hoped for their own members. Their way of proceeding, as described by Nadal, is one of *spiritu* (i.e. consolation – an ongoing and direct sense of God's presence), *corde* (how Jesuits were to deal with others and how they hoped others would respond to them), and *practice* (i.e. pastoral – "help of souls" in body and spirit).[95] The recurring themes of "our way of proceeding", "consolation" and "helping souls" together suggest the intimate and intrinsic relationship between Jesuit spirituality and vocation, especially to education.

[93] O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 21-22.
[94] Ibid., 133.
[95] See Ibid., 372-373.

Good pedagogy is critical to good teaching and learning, and Jesuit pedagogy has proven its worth for almost five hundred years. Ignatian spirituality as reflected in the *Exercises* imbues any practical application of Jesuit education and informs the pedagogies that ensue, from the *Ratio* of 1599, to the more recent pedagogical documents of the 1990s. Nevertheless, I agree with both LaCroix and Gray that the heart of Jesuit education has not been its pedagogical methods. The success of Jesuit education cannot be found in the letter of the *Ratio.* Rather, the spiritual tradition of Jesuit education is clearly rooted in Ignatian spirituality, most specifically in the *Spiritual Exercises*. The Ignatian understanding of the nature and purpose of good learning is its core.

To craft a spiritual pedagogy for today we can look to the resource that is Ignatian spirituality. The educational mission is infused with the dynamics of spirituality and vocation, with the goal of forming authentic relationships and caring for those who need it most. Jesuit education is not about uniformity. In today's world marked by pluralism and secularization, perhaps it is not even about unity. Nonetheless, it has a significant role to play in a world of restless hearts, yearning for fulfillment. It speaks a clear message of discernment, interior freedom, vocation, good relationships, and faith and justice. These form common threads throughout all Jesuit education, formal or informal, school-based or society-wide, in the past or present. The configurations and principles of a spiritual pedagogy grounded in Ignatian spirituality and their praxis implications will be the focus of chapter 4.

Chapter 4: A spiritual pedagogy to sustain teachers

"*We shall not cease from exploration*
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time."
(T.S. Eliot)

Introduction

With the need to ground the discourse on teachers and vocation in spirituality, and having examined the Ignatian tradition as one resource to do so, this chapter turns to producing a spiritual pedagogy to sustain teachers. I repeat that whereas the immediate function of this spiritual pedagogy is to sustain the educator, the school community as a whole reaps the benefits.

I situate this chapter in the busy reality of every school day; my focus is everyday life for teachers. My proposed pedagogy reaches into the spirituality that is inherent to the human condition, a facet of every one of us that is unrelenting in its need to be satisfied. It recognizes, however, that the vocation to teach, in a unique and compelling way, calls forth and requires the spiritual resources of teachers and asks of them a spiritual pedagogy. Using the Ignatian lens, the idea of this spiritual pedagogy is to give and confirm for teachers a sense of purpose and of God's presence in their lives.

It is also worth reiterating that I see spirituality as central to every teacher (indeed, every person), no matter who they are, where they work, or who or what they teach. It does not assume any particular religious tradition, or religious faith at all. But my proposal does account for the search for what is meaningful in life, and places this search within a transcendent horizon. Whether we call this deep and universal sense of

transcendence Higher Power, Allah, Yahweh, Mother Goddess, Center of Ultimate Value, Ground of all Being, or by any other name, it is something universal to the human condition. Because my own tradition is that of Catholic Christianity, I will name it God and understand the personal God of love revealed in Jesus Christ.

In the Ignatian mindset, teaching is a spiritual activity because all vocation is grounded in spirituality; done well all work both reveals and gives glory to God. In the same way, teachers are inherently spiritual because all people are spiritual and capable of personal relationship with God. The purpose of Jesuit education has recently been described as "for the complete good of the student and for the good of that student's world."[1] Whereas this echoes the position of some teacher educators,[2] and certainly reflects one aspect of Ignatian spirituality, it is a limited view. Jesuit education began with Ignatius' experiences at Manresa; his *Spiritual Exercises* are a gift to the whole world. Focusing exclusively or even mostly on the student is not enough; teachers also deserve care and attention.

Caring for the spirituality of all members of the education community, including teachers, clearly emanates from the Ignatian sense of *cura personalis* and from the *magis* which appeals to a nurturing of 'the more' of teachers as well as students.[3] Ignatius designed his *Exercises* in order to help people follow the patterns of light and shadow in the details of their lives, forge their freedom and use it wisely, widen their awareness of grace at work in all created things and all people, and choose to live in harmony with this wider world - for the glory of God. In short, the *Exercises* were to help men and women achieve a freedom that would direct how they live, and in turn help others to do the same.

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[1] LaCroix S.J., *The Jesuit Spirit of Education: Ignatius, Tradition, and Today's Questions*, chapter 2.
[2] See for instance Noddings (2.1) and Nieto (2.3), chapter 2.
[3] For a more detailed description of *cura personalis* and the *magis* see chapter 3:2.

Five configurations of a spiritual pedagogy to sustain teachers

Inspired and guided by this Ignatian charism, my proposed pedagogy rests on five configurations. These configurations emerge from the motivators of desire to serve and relationality that sustain teachers as unearthed in previous chapters in conversation with the Ignatian spiritual view of teachers and the work they do. Like the five points of Manhattan's Lower East side as depicted in Martin Scorsese's *Gangs of New York*,[4] home to immigrants of all nationalities in the latter part of the nineteenth century, it houses a tenement of themes. Although I have distinguished the configurations from each other for the sake of clarity, they are inextricably linked and dynamically overlap. In this spiritual pedagogy, the first configuration is the mid-point, the center of gravity, so to speak. The subsequent four configurations radiate from the center, and are in a constant state of flux, like a cocktail umbrella circling on its axis, before coming to rest in a martini.

Chapter 4 sets out to delineate these five configurations, so that the locale is navigable, without losing its color or its depth. The idea here is that when certain spiritual commitments in the form of these five configurations become operative for educators, they cannot but become realized in their teaching. Taking each configuration in turn, I begin by commenting on its relevance to a spiritual pedagogy. Next I discuss the pedagogical principle that ensues, and finally the implications for good pedagogical praxis.

[4] Martin Scorsese, "Gangs of New York," (USA: Miramax Films, 2002).

1. The World as God's Creation

The world is a glorious place. Take a walk around the ethnic neighborhoods of London or New York and experience the sights and the smells, the color and the choreography of so many peoples. Stroll a Sunday afternoon along Boston's esplanade or Donegal's green hills and know the pulsating power and beauty of our natural ecosystems. Whereas travel can give us a first hand appreciation for cultures different to our own, we don't have to go very far away to witness the wonder of creation. The world outside our own front door, wherever that might be, is just as revealing. Indeed, every neighborhood has its folk songs, its artists, its writers that celebrate the local flavor of creation. In sharing with us what they have seen, they invite us to open our eyes to see with them. I am reminded of the scene in the movie *American Beauty*, where Ricky, the introspective boy-next-door, bonds with Jane over footage of a white plastic bag 'dancing' in the breeze, because it is the most beautiful thing he has ever recorded.[5]

Ignatian spirituality appreciates this cosmology. It sees beyond the sham, drudgery and broken dreams to the beauty of the world, resonant with evidence of transcendence. "The very commonness of everyday things harbors the eternal marvel and silent mystery of God and [God's] grace."[6] In such a spiritually inspired pedagogy, all of life comes from God. All reality has value because everything can lead us to God. God is always present in our lives, "laboring for us". God can be discovered in all natural and human events, in history, and most especially in the lived experience of every person. This realization led to the oft-quoted phrase of Ignatius "to find God in all

[5] Sam Mendes, "American Beauty," (USA: Dreamworks, 1999).
[6] Karl Rahner quoted by Groome, *Educating for Life: A Spiritual Vision for Every Teacher and Parent*, 139.

things."[7] God's presence is everywhere, if we can just open our hearts to feel it. Nor is this presence neutral; on the contrary God is present as and with grace – God's effective love in our lives – and to reveal Godself, love and will to us. It is in this grace and presence that we can recognize and respond to God's will for us – the daily working out of our vocation.

Of course, Ignatius did not invent this understanding of God; his is simply a summary phrase of the classic Christian understanding that in every aspect of our lives – the places we go, people we meet, experiences we have, there is a whisper of God. Indeed, much of the biblical wisdom concerning vocation today unearthed in chapter 2 resonates with this configuration. For instance, Moses' witness at the burning bush reminds us to seek and find the glory of God in every created thing, even the lowly bush of the wastelands. What Ignatius did was to remind us to stop, reflect, and become aware of this presence at any given moment – "to find God in all things."

1.1 Pedagogical principle of world as God's creation

At least one clear pedagogical principle emerges from this vision of the world: all education should be suffused with and nurture a sense of reverence and awe at the mystery of life and wonder at God's creation. What God creates is essentially good; we encounter and respond to God through the everyday stuff of life. A spiritual pedagogy suggests becoming aware of and alert to God's presence in all the messy bits and pieces of daily living. It means cultivating an attitude that sees the world as gracious, meaningful, and worthwhile.[8] The world, ultimately, is gift. We are sustained by our

[7] See chapter 3: 1.1.
[8] I have borrowed this three-fold summary from Groome. See Groome, *Educating for Life: A Spiritual Vision for Every Teacher and Parent*, 130.

sense of purpose, ultimately to give glory to God. When approached with this attitude toward creation, every discipline of learning can uncover a sense of transcendence. We can certainly find God through reading the Bible, but God's presence is also discernable whether we look through a microscope or a telescope; whether we hear *acapella* or with full orchestra. Every discipline of learning from astrology to zoology is capable of revealing transcendence. This type of education is world affirming and is conducted in a spirit of reverence, awe, and gratitude.

Although we traditionally tend to view schools as institutions made up of teachers and learners, in the world view of Ignatius where God is teacher- supreme, we are all learners. Lifelong learning is a universal vocation. Everyone should be open to learning and growth in the school community; teachers learn from students, from their colleagues and from members of the wider school community.

The most formidable obstacle to this attitude is the reality of suffering and evil in the world, sometimes caused by natural disasters, more often by human irresponsibility. In spite of the reality of evil and suffering, we can understand life as essentially good and see it as a gift. Even with the realities of life, we can decide to hold onto our agency, responsibility and hope, and respond to the call to generativity.[9]

1.2 Praxis implications of world as God's creation

Cosmic consciousness: When this principle is operational, teachers try to nurture people in world awareness. They work towards a cosmic consciousness, encouraging people to stop, look, listen, relish, enjoy, and care for the presence in their midst. A cosmic consciousness engenders a sense of the gift of creation which also evokes

[9] Ibid., 148-150.

responsibility and stewardship. It stretches beyond the role of the teacher to the environment of the school itself and caring for the aesthetic of the school.

The configuration of world as God's creation encourages contemplation – taking time to dwell briefly on what lifts us up and what brings us down in the ordinary events of the day. Teachers can decide to take a moment now and then, even in the busy reality of the school environment, to reflect on their own attitudes to the world, and own expressions of them. They can alert students to the 'more' around them; even without religious language or categories, we can look beyond the obvious and ordinary to the 'more' in our midst. In working towards this principle, every teacher regardless of the discipline of learning can honor the aesthetic, the imagination, the practice of celebration.[10] Teachers can communicate their belief that all of us are created to co-operate with God's creation by working together to develop students to full potential.

Attitude of wonder and gratitude: When education is conducted in a spirit of wonder and gratitude, every lesson presents a new challenge to pull out that "wonderful remark'[11] that might allow people to see life in a new way, often without using explicit God-talk. Teachers should try to create a sense of wonder and mystery in learning about the world in their classrooms. They need to push back against the concealing and deceiving messages of contemporary life and try to relate the subject matter to the mystery and gracious goodness of God at work in our lives and in our culture.

Every teacher can cultivate an attitude of giving thanks and congratulations. This then becomes part of the everyday school ethos, rather than associated merely with big

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[10] See Ibid., chapter 3.

[11] "That was a Wonderful Remark
I had my eyes closed in the dark"
See Van Morrison, *Wonderful Remark*(accessed Feb 8th 2008); available from http://www.absolutelyrics.com/lyrics/view/van_morrison/wonderful_remark/.

occasions like end of semester, or a major sporting victory. It reflects the understanding that we are co-workers with our students, and with the school community, and we all share in each other's success.

Uncovering human meaning: The spiritual tradition of Jesuit education assumes that it is possible to teach any subject while conveying in some way how the subject matter fits into human life in society and into the goals of human life.[12] Adaptability to suit the person, time and circumstance was central to Ignatius' methodology.[13] Uncovering the human meaning embedded in what one studies and teaches involves reflection – "a thoughtful reconsideration of some subject matter, experience, idea, purpose, or spontaneous reaction, in order to grasp its significance more fully. Thus, reflection is the process by which meaning surfaces in human experience."[14] This moves learning beyond an objective grasp of data to personal appropriation; it entails thinking through to a personal understanding in contrast to childish, memorized knowledge.

Thomas Groome sees critical reflection as a process which involves not only critical reason, but also analytical memory, and creative imagination.[15] I agree that remembering and imagination are essential to uncovering the human meaning and personal appropriation of what one studies; (indeed all three faculties – reason, memory, and imagination – are central to all five configurations). Remembering helps us connect the significance of what we study with our own life experiences; imagination allows us to see the 'more' in the ordinary, to ask "is there a better way?" and to motivate us into

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[12] Wilfred L. LaCroix S.J., *The Jesuit Spirit of Education: Ignatius, Tradition, and Today's Questions, 66.*
[13] Ignatius highlighted the practice of prayer in the form of meditation and contemplation as distinct from the recitation of formulae. With this feature, the *Exercises* prescribe no single method as correct; different methods help different people.
[14] International Commission on the Apostolate of Jesuit Education, "Ignatian Pedagogy: A Practical Approach, 1993," 257.
[15] Groome, *Educating for Life: A Spiritual Vision for Every Teacher and Parent*, 164.

action.

2. Authentic personhood

Whether talking about vocation, desires, dreams, or disappointments, authentic personhood is essential to good teaching.[16] If, as I suggested in chapter 2, our relationships are web like, following the ecological paradigm, we need to start with an integrated, authentic sense of oneself. From an Ignatian perspective, authentic personhood involves the ability to step back and look at our lives, loves, relationships, and behavior patterns, and to momentarily suspend judgment. It means giving oneself permission to have frank and honest dialogue with one's inner self, without praise, without blame. It is from this place that I can enter into discernment about my life and what it is saying to me, about my past, my present, my future; that I can look forward to positive lasting relationships with other people, with this Earth we call home, with my God. In authentic personhood I find the peace to be myself, and to be at peace with my God. As Max Erhman's poem *Desiderata* reminds us

> Beyond a wholesome discipline,
> be gentle with yourself.
> You are a child of the universe
> no less than the trees and the stars;
> you have a right to be here.[17]

Authentic personhood extends to becoming the kind of person we wish to become through our moral choices. We are defined as persons above all by our values, by the habitual moral choices we make. This is sometimes a threat to authentic personhood.

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[16] For the teacher, one's personhood is also shaped by one's passion for one or more academic disciplines, whether in art, literature, biology, mathematics, or any other discipline, or by the rainbow of subjects in primary grades.

[17] Max Ehrman, *Desiderata*(1927, accessed Jan 26th 2008); available from http://www.fleurdelis.com/desiderata.htm.

Because of sin and the effects of sin, a free and faithful response to God's love is not automatic. But aided and strengthened by the redeeming love of God that is effective in our lives through grace, we engage in an ongoing struggle to recognize and work against the obstacles that block freedom, while developing the capacities necessary for the exercise of true freedom. Deep within each of us in the instinct to cry "*What I do is me: for that I came."*[18] This configuration allows us to face down the situation described by Rabbi Zusya so that we can answer: I may not have been Moses, but I was myself.[19]

Authentic personhood takes at least a lifetime, but there are moments of revelation along the way that allow us to glimpse who we truly are. Like the rich young man who ends up envying the swine their scraps, his fair-weather friends scattered in search of a good time - in that moment when he is brought so low by his own created hell - he "comes to himself" (Lk 15:17). Torn between remorse and self-loathing, he knows that somewhere there is a love he spurned, gently calling him home.

The moment of "coming to oneself" can be triggered by another person, by community, or by an unexpected connection that reminds us of who we are – perhaps a chat with a stranger or the insight of a child. I am reminded for instance of that other motherless child, Scout Finch, who becomes the agent of self-realization for the lynch-hungry Walter Cunningham with the words "Tell [your son] hey for me, wont' you?"[20]

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[18] 'As kingfishers catch fire', in Hopkins, *Gerard Manley Hopkins: The Major Works (Oxford World's Classics)*, 129.

[19] In an old Hasidic tale, Rabbi Zusya, approaching the end of his days, commented, "In the coming world, they will not ask me: 'Why were you not Moses?' They will ask me: 'Why were you not Zusya?'"

[20] Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Warner Books ed. (New York: Warner Books, 1982), chapter 15.

2.1 Pedagogical principle of authentic personhood

Two principles arise from the configuration of authentic personhood. The first of these can be summarized by the Ignatian attitude of *cura personalis*. *Cura personalis* is an outcome of the conviction that every person is personally known and loved by God[21] – another classic Judeo-Christian understanding.[22] This loves invites a response. To be authentically human, such a response must be an expression of our freedom.

Ignatian spirituality sees education as the best means of helping people to flourish so they might help others to do the same. Of course this starts with the teacher. The configuration of authentic personhood views every member of the school community as legitimate focus of the education enterprise and insists on individual care and concern for each one. It remembers the old adage of Thomas Aquinas so favored by the early Jesuits, "*Nemo dat quod not habet*" - you can't give what you don't have; every teacher has a right and responsibility to care for their own spirituality. It bespeaks the importance of supporting the teacher's lifelong journey to wholeness – an ethic of self-care. Like the ultimate Teacher, sometimes we too have to withdraw to the sea, avoid the crush, ask for a boat (Mk 3: 7-9).

A life of balance and integration calls for a holistic sense of mind, body, and spirit. Once we have a reasonably secure sense of self, it is important that we don't get sucked into a false arrogance or self-sufficiency. Authentic personhood is not a self to become wrapped up in, a sheath of cotton wool or a suit of armor. "No man is an

[21] See chapter 3: 2.2.
[22] See for instance psalms 104 and 105.

island"[23] as the poet speaks; we are made for togetherness, and we have a sense of participating in something greater than ourselves.

A second principle relates to the responsibility of education to teach people how to discern their vocation in life. In the course of his conversion, Ignatius learned discernment, the capacity to reflect prayerfully on his experience at the most profound level and to learn from it.[24] Discernment is at the heart of coming to authenticity. Ignatian spirituality offers the gift of both personal and communal discernment. Of course these are not separate gifts; one has to be capable of personal discernment in order to engage in the communal model.[25]

For Ignatius, education is about discernment and vocation – discerning who we are, how we view life and the role of others, God, and the created world. It asks: is my life really my own, and how do I go about discovering and implementing what really gives me joy? In other words, this approach forces us to ask difficult questions and apply what we learn to our lives. It denies, for instance, that education is simply for ourselves, so we can 'make it in the world' whatever that means to the person; it is more important to share a common goal and understanding. It sees education as a powerful route to discovering and fostering the dignity of every person.

Significant for those who find themselves mis-matched with teaching, "The *Constitutions* urged gentleness, compassion, and consideration for those who found a discord between their inner selves and the road in life they had chosen, and suggested

[23] "No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the main." John Donne, *Meditation Xvii*(accessed Feb 2nd 2008); available from http://www.quotationspage.com/quote/29901.html.
[24] See chapter 3: 2.4.
[25] See for instance Donal Dorr, *Faith at Work: A Spirituality of Leadership* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2006), chapter 13.

specific ways to help them make the transition."[26] Remaining faithful to one's vocation was not something Ignatius took for granted. Indeed, as they grew older and perhaps a little weary, both Ignatius and Francis Xavier wrote to each other of "the sad misery of this life." Both men understood what it is to suffer from a *taedium vitae*.[27] Pedro Arrupe too understood this tension. In words reminiscent of the plight of Moses who saw but never reached the Promised Land, Arrupe remarks, "our efforts will never be fully successful in this life. This does not mean that such efforts are worthless."[28] The phenomenon of 'not yet' is the inevitable outcome of human vocation and discernment.

2.2 Praxis implications of authentic personhood

Cura personalis: When *cura personalis* is operational, teachers see a world of uniquely dignified people. They live by the premise that people perform their best when working with and for a community that offers genuine support and affection, respect and inclusion. Thus, the first pedagogical praxis that ensues from the configuration of authentic personhood is one that affirms people, dignifies them, and celebrates their unique gifts. For teachers, it also insists on an ethic of self-care. It asks teachers to try to live with their imperfections, finding God in their mistakes, letting go of self-image, whether all-knowing expert, fount of benevolence, or whatever one's self-image as a teacher might be. It means accepting our limitations, but at the same time setting high standards for ourselves so that we do our job well.

Discernment: Authentic living involves developing the ability to discern. Discernment requires self-awareness. It is the deepest self-consciousness of a person

[26] O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 59. See *Const.*, #223-229.
[27] Tellechea Idigoras, *Ignatius of Loyola: The Pilgrim Saint*, 546.
[28] Arrupe S.J., "Men for Others (1974)," 36.

insofar as it acts as a power of discrimination, deciding what will promote authentic personhood and what will stand in its way. Discernment, like good conscience, relies not on a list of "do's" and "don'ts" but, rather, on paying attention to the internal movements of the Spirit. Within the academic curriculum, discernment involves probing the fundamental question "what lessons can we learn from what we are studying?"

The first task of discernment is to help us to see well. This is important for teachers and their pedagogy. In other words, they need to learn to ask "what is going on here" before "what ought I to do?" But vision is shaped by our backgrounds, experiences and cultures, what Richard Gula calls our 'stories.'[29] Therefore, teachers need to engage students in critical reason, and prioritize the skills of probing, calling into question, and reflection on life in the classroom. But good discernment also involves the ability to remember and imagine – to relate the meaning of what we are learning to our own lives and to ask "is there a better way?" Our imaginations shape what we see and how we respond. Thus teachers need to be critically alert to the images at play in their own imaginations. The more they participate in the stories, images, rituals, and language of a community, the more they begin to take on its way of seeing. This is why it is imperative that teachers know and use the skills of discernment – social as well as personal - and work intentionally to engender them in their students.

The praxis that *cura personalis* and teaching and modeling discernment asks of teachers must be undergirded by opportunities for teachers to learn discernment practices and by community support. However, frequently the demands for care and love made on teachers take over, and the care and love for the person of the teacher is forgotten. Teachers can work toward true freedom in themselves by learning to recognize and deal

[29] Richard M. Gula SS, *Reason Informed by Faith* (New York: Paulist, 1989).

with the influences that can prevent or limit freedom: the movements within their own hearts; past experiences of all types; interactions with other people, and the dynamics of history, social structures, and culture. When they are supported by their colleagues and by the nature and purpose of the school, teachers feel safe in working toward this freedom. Such an environment encourages teachers to accept the help that the school provides[30] and to support colleagues who are engaging in similar work.

3. Others in community

Although *cura personalis* highlights care of the person, such care must be mediated through and by care of the community. A spiritual pedagogy emphasizes relationality- we are relational by nature; as humans we are capable of healthy and life-giving relationship. This configuration relates primarily to the school community. For teachers, it extends especially to students, but also their families, and to colleagues, leaders, and policy makers. Not only is the teaching life made easier and more fulfilling, and the classroom more manageable if the teacher-student relationship is positive, we must also remember that caring relationship is a big motivator for choosing to teach in the first place. Further, when a school directs attention to the social basis for human engagement, the life of the school becomes a source of considerable meaning for members. By providing them with sustained encounters that pose questions about the nature of person and society and worthy personal and social aims, schools best prepare

[30] The support that schools can provide in order to help with the praxis implications of my proposed pedagogy is discussed in chapter 5.

people for democratic citizenship.[31] Therefore, promoting good relationships within a life-giving community need to be a front and center concern in schools.

This configuration is deeply ingrained in the Ignatian approach. Even the fact that the Jesuits were to be known as "companions" – of Jesus and to each other – immediately highlights the emphasis on community. This approach talks about a way of knowing as one that engages the whole person, in community, with openness and self-reflection. It favors an ethic of self-care grounded in relationship and relational approaches to teaching – partnership rather than rugged individualism – and guides us to see ourselves as belonging to communities of culture, communities as societies, community of nature, all engaged through the academic curriculum.

Of course it cannot be presumed that all relationships are healthy, or that the school naturally supports healthy community. For instance, I have already mentioned the dangers of over self-reliance and over reliance on the people around us.[32] If we over-rely on others for our sense of self, then we are governed by the need to please, the desire to be liked. If we dismiss those around us and rely totally on ourselves, then we lose out on the challenge and support of community to grow into our best selves. Tuohy points to the community dimension as a central concern of every person. Yet this concern is paradoxical. "In each of us, there is a tension between a desire to be autonomous and a desire to be nurtured and dependent. We want to be part of the group and yet we want to be free of any ties which hinder our personal development."[33] Ease with this paradox requires good conversation on one hand, and opportunities for learning and practicing

[31] Anthony S. Bryk, Valerie E. Lee, and Peter B. Holland, *Catholic Schools and the Common Good* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993), 306-321.
[32] See chapter 2: 3.1
[33] Tuohy, *The Inner World of Teaching: Exploring Assumptions*, 179.

discernment on the other. For a school to be non-alienating, it must seek a dynamic balance between participation in a collective life and honoring the individuality of every person

3.1 Pedagogical principle of community

Three principles arise from this configuration: the importance of positive personal relationships, of teachers as stakeholders in the school enterprise, and of members of the community together and individually reaching for 'the more'.

As keystone of Jesuit pastoral identity, the *Exercises* gave rise to practices that extended to the ministry of education. The clearest of these was the role played by the person who guided the retreatant.[34] If such a relationship worked in one setting, it might be helpful in another. Of course, Ignatius was not the first to advocate a positive, supportive relationship between teacher and student. Juan de Avila, for example, had already (c.1527) argued for an affectionate and trusting relationship between teacher and student, as indeed had Augustine in the 4rth century. The contribution of Ignatian spirituality lies in the careful consideration given to the role of the guide, modeled on how Ignatius experienced God as teacher. The delicacy of the role of the guide was understood from the start. Rather than directive or prescriptive, the model was one of conversation.[35] The most important pedagogical principle was that people more deeply appreciate what they discover for themselves.[36] Of course, as life long learners, teachers as well as students need supportive, personal relationships to sustain and nurture them in their work.

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[34] See chapter 3: 2.2
[35] This model is drawn from a practice known as "colloquy" in the *Exercises*, where the retreatant enters into a personal dialogue with any Person of the Trinity, or Our Lady (see for instance, #53, #63).
[36] O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 131.

Communal discernment is a characteristic of Ignatian spirituality. Active participation by all members was regular practice for the early Society. Ignatius endorsed a system of communication through which the consultative base extended to every member.[37] Moreover, the first Jesuits made decisions on the basis of an ongoing process of personal and communal discernment. This allowed them to review past decisions and make adaptations in a constant search for greater service of God (*magis*). Today, for example, this aspect of Ignatian spirituality would remind us that there is no uniform 'way of proceeding' for schools. Every school can and should work out a way of proceeding for itself using the gifts of reflection and discernment. For schools today this requires giving voice for teachers in school life and policy, and some context in which they can have public discourse about school community life, for example a faculty council. Howard Gray suggests that the *Spiritual Exercises* can provide a model for communal discernment, again regardless of the religious or cultural make-up of the group.[38] The idea of communal discernment and suggestions for actively realizing teachers as stakeholders in the school enterprise are discussed further in chapter 5.

Detachment, or freedom from false attachments, is one of the key fruits of Ignatian discernment. It is significant in the school setting because it alleviates the teacher of total responsibility for the outcome in students' lives and lends a sense that winning is not the most important thing in life. In other words, detachment can serve as an antidote to the competitiveness of contemporary education and the striving to be the best that appears part and parcel of our society. This spiritual value calls teachers to

[37] This occurred through the insistence on letters, and on the manifestation of conscience prescribed for every superior in the *Constitutions.* The latter feature was to enable superiors to make the best use of the talent and suitabilities of the men in their care, and to avoid placing them in ministries which they could not endure "with a spirit of love" (*Const.*, #92).
[38] Howard J. Gray SJ, "Foundations," *Discerning Together, The Way Supplement 85* (Spring 1996).

encourage imagination, memory, and critical thinking in themselves and their students, to treat each person as a unique human being, to recognize that the best results are usually not measured in grades. Detachment and the art of communal discernment are essential for a school to remain adaptable and open to growth.

Ignatian spirituality insists on the "*magis*" (the more).[39] The *magis* lies in the courage to commit to a way of life that focuses on goals that are greater than one's present reach or grasp. It challenges people to step beyond their safety zones, to go that extra mile, to help people one might rather pretend not to see. The *magis* encourages people to aim high and keeps them pointed toward something more, something greater; it involves a commitment to excellence - more completely understood as variety of excellences. Nevertheless, the school is vigilant for excesses and extremes of 'excellence'. For instance, it is easy in a school system that is preparing students for high stakes testing or an extremely competitive exam such as SAT that the focus of excellence can become exclusively academic and test-driven. Similarly, it is tempting in a culture that reveres sporting success that excellence might become synonymous with winning at all costs.

3.2 Praxis implications of community

The primacy of positive personal relationships undergirds the following pedagogical praxis. Teachers must prioritize forming positive relationships with their students and colleagues in order for this praxis to become operational.

Forming community: The pedagogical principles above suggest that nurturing cooperation is a central task of teaching. Forming good community members and

[39] See chapter 3: 2.3

fostering civic pride at the local level becomes the first praxis implication from this configuration. In the classroom, this means encouraging students to join groups, to work in partnerships, to become collaborative, to take part in the extra or co-curricular activities that the school offers, not merely to beef up one's resume, but to learn the importance and the skills of living well together in community.

This configuration sees the school as community – where the strong help the weak and are open to learning from the less obvious gifts they bring. Teachers can emphasize collaboration, rather than simply competition by valuing the fruits of collaborative projects rather than focusing on individual ranking. Although reaching one's academic potential remains a legitimate aim of education, competing for grades should not be the main focus. Through participative pedagogy and group learning, the classroom becomes a co-learning community, with teachers and students learning from one another. Teachers must decide to treat students and colleagues as they would wish their students and colleagues to treat them.

Building support and community involves creating a welcome rather than a hostile environment. It prioritizes loyalty and compassion. None of the tragedies of life such as death of a loved one, serious illness, financial worries, family concerns, or addiction can be separated from ourselves, our spirituality, and therefore from our workplace. It means recognizing the fun in our work. No-one who has ever worked with young people can deny the energy, good humor, and sense of fun they generally bring to the group. It involves sharing oneself – being open to conversations that may arise without pushing one's spiritual practices or beliefs on conversation partners. Finally, teachers can build community by focusing on what is positive about the school system,

not blindly or unreflectively, and by engaging in constructive critique because no system or institution is beyond improvement.

Achieving excellence: Teachers need to periodically reflect on how to encourage their students to achieve excellence, whatever that might mean for each individual student. Indeed, teachers should ask and expect the best from their students. Nieto reminds us that "every day, exceptional teachers in schools throughout the nations tackle difficult circumstances in heroic but quiet ways" by refusing to give in to negative expectations.[40] Moreover, teachers need to understand that the notion of "best" differs from student to student, and provide opportunities for every student to develop their potential. Excellence is best understood as a variety of excellences, and achieving one's potential differs from student to student.

At the same time, teachers also expect the best from themselves and from their colleagues and leaders. However, this requires teachers allowing themselves to be known as persons and not exclusively professionals, appropriate sharing of their own personhood behind the professional mask. Teachers should also reflect on what the ideal of excellence in all things means for themselves when they think of their own growth and development as teacher – personally, professionally, and spiritually. With their colleagues they need to engage in the discussion of what learning is for and what responsibilities come with knowledge. Education brings responsibilities and what one does with one's learning is of crucial import.

4. Reaching out (to the wider community): Journeying

This configuration flows from the desire often expressed by teachers that they

[40] Nieto, *What Keeps Teachers Going?* 52.

want to make a difference. The desire to serve, to contribute something to society is a major intrinsic motivation for teachers, as identified in this project.[41] Often this goes beyond the immediate community; we frequently grow into other levels and dimensions of the desire to serve as we develop in maturity, wisdom, and wholeness. This is not to say that we have to travel to do good. Sometimes we cannot let go of imagining that what is good and worthwhile lies in far away fields, and thus fail to discover the good to be done within and all around us. On the other hand, this configuration often involves leaving a place of security, perhaps where as teachers we have taken a local interest in the well-being and welfare of students and given generously of time and effort on their behalf, but stayed all the while within our comfort zone.

The emerging backdrop of globalization in the new millennium calls for an ability not only to care for a particular person, community, or cause, but also to be able to see the larger implications of our actions, and to recognize how our work affects and is affected by interdependent realities. This element of a spiritual pedagogy is intended as preparation and sustenance for a life of active social commitment. It aims to form men and women who will exercise leadership based on the values of love and care, with a particular concern for the poor and marginalized; people who will seek to be agents of positive change rather than passive upholders of the status quo. Reaching out in service often involves reaching into the unknown, listening to one's deep desires, allowing ourselves to hear a call we might rather ignore. Indeed, the biblical narratives of chapter 2 point to the importance of paying attention to a call to serve the wider community – the whole people of Israel - even if it engenders a level of discomfort, and to the ability to reflect, discern, and trust in the process of discerning vocation.

[41] See chapter 1.

This configuration reflects what Jesuit communities call a 'faith that does justice,' many teacher educators term 'social justice' or O'Malley simple calls 'ministry' for the early Jesuits. Social justice requires that we affirm what people reasonably need in order to live out their lives as full human persons and to grow toward fulfillment. The end of Jesuit education remains the freeing of people to be agents for the freeing of themselves and others in society. This theme of liberation refers back originally to the *Exercises*, but forward to matters of justice and injustice in society and between societies today.

Faith that does justice has become a central tenet of contemporary Jesuit commitment since Fr Arrupe captured the imagination of the Society with this priority in the 1970s.[42] However, if faith that does justice is our point of departure, we need to be clear how we understand these terms and the link between them. For Robert Starratt, the issue is belief in and love of God and then love for our neighbor as an expression of our faith/love of God. The model for just relationship is not a legal contract between humans, but the covenant between God and God's people, as discussed in chapter 2.[43] This has to be our point of departure, rather than an understanding of justice focused solely on economic or political activity or the Aristotelian notion of justice "to give everyone their due."

4.1 Pedagogical principle of journeying

Every system of education has a duty to educate for justice in society, to help form the characters of people to live justly. It is not sufficient simply to mandate this responsibility to teachers; the person of the teacher is also in need of continual

[42] See chapter 3: 2.5
[43] Robert J. Starratt, "Sowing Seeds of Faith and Justice (1980)," in *Foundations*, ed. Carl E. Meirose SJ (Washington DC: JSEA, 1994), 111.

nourishment in their commitment to justice.[44] Of course, the best way to prepare for active engagement with issues of social justice is in one's own community. Justice, like all great virtues, begins at home.

The pedagogical principle arising from this configuration stresses collaboration in service of shared values, a common task and an overarching vision. It is value-oriented, encouraging a realistic knowledge, love and acceptance of self and providing a realistic knowledge of the world in which we live. It works to equip its members in both the desire and the ability to make good decisions, and to participate well in the public sphere. Dan O'Connell describes the public sphere as the place where people learn about and add their voices to the issues of concern in society. It aims for consensus or compromise, for the sake of the common good.[45] Thus, the community of the school must embrace not only those within it – students, teachers and members of the wider staff – but also the wider world, particularly those in need of help.

Faith inspires justice; this is not to say that there is no justice without faith, or that work for justice depends on faith. Indeed, the late Fr Pedro Arrupe asserts that the dependent relationship is between love and justice; these virtues are one and the same. Arrupe goes on to articulate three attitudes to be brought home to people: respect for all persons, never to profit from positions of power, and an attitude not simply of refusal, but of counterattack against injustice.[46] These attitudes are central to the pedagogical principle arising from the configuration of reaching out to all "others".

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[44] Whereas we cannot draw a clear distinction between a person's personal and professional life, it must be recognized that personal lives reach beyond the scope of the school boundaries – pragmatically and ethically.

[45] Dan O'Connell, "Religious Education and the Public Sphere," *The Furrow* 57, no. 7/8 (July/August 2006).

[46] Arrupe S.J., "Men for Others (1974)," 39.

Emphasizing the inseparable nature of personal conversion and social reform, Arrupe insists that "interior conversion is not enough. God's grace calls us not only to win back our whole selves for God, but to win back our whole world for God. We cannot separate personal conversion from structural social reform."[47] To that end, continuing education for teachers is not simply the updating of technical or professional knowledge; it is the call to conversion, to prepare us for witnessing to justice as we understand it from the signs of the times. In the same spirit of constant self-improvement, every school is called to adapt and develop in the light of its shared wisdom and the local circumstances in which it operates, and members of staff are encouraged to avail of opportunities for their own continuing formation.[48]

4.2 Praxis implications of journeying

Vision and understanding of teaching: this configuration implies a need for teachers to see their work as a social and political activity and to understand that it is possible for each one to structure a pedagogy to promote (or demote) social justice. When this understanding of the nature and purpose of teaching is operational, teachers work with their students to discover how knowledge can be applied to bring about a more humane and just society. They reflect on an appropriate extent to act as advocate for students who are poor, socially deprived, or educationally disadvantaged. Every teacher tries to teach collaboration with their students and is open to collaboration with teachers in other subject areas as well as in their own departments.

Teachers must demonstrate respect for all their students and colleagues, and members of the wider community. Building on the attitudes articulated by Arrupe above,

[47] Ibid., 36.
[48] For suggestion of such opportunities see chapter 5.

and echoing a central theme of Paulo Freire, teachers need to recognize their positions of power, and decide to use their power as power with – to empower others – rather than power over. They should recognize and face up to situations of injustice rather than attempt to remain neutral. In the end, we always take a position, even by our indifference. This praxis relates to matters of injustice at home (in the classroom) and beyond, to include the world at large.

Teaching for citizenship: Another central pedagogical praxis is fostering a commitment to the common good, and a sense of responsibility for the public sphere. I use the term citizenship to mean not just fulfilling one's duty at a civic level, but including a commitment to justice, compassion, and a catholic consciousness. Catholicity in this regard refers to an attitude which sees everybody as my neighbor. The plight of people of different faith traditions, cultures, or ethnicities becomes my plight, because we are all members of the human family. Teachers need to foster this type of universal consciousness – a truly "catholic" outlook in their students. This praxis also asks teachers to encourage students in a social consciousness and the ability to do social analysis.

5. Reaching back (towards home): Homecoming

An essential part of journeying is coming home. This means returning to the place we started from and seeing it with new eyes, coming home to tell our story. The encounters of life change us, sometimes remarkably, often almost imperceptibly. Like the Magi transformed by the witness of a new-born child, we sometimes return by a different route. But however we make our journey, returning to the place that sent us forth is part of the transforming experience. Home is where we get a chance to explore

what we have learned, the changes wrought, and to integrate them into our authentic selves. T.S. Eliot writes that "We shall not cease from exploration. And the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time."[49] Regardless of where we journey to, our experiences only make sense if we can integrate them with our lives. This is the essence of transformation, which can be described as a new consciousness, a new way of being in the world, a sensitivity to others.

Coming home for a teacher means constantly revisiting the vocation to teach, to listen again to one's calling, to reflect on life's purpose, even when all seems well. This is not a once-off occurrence; it takes place at intervals over the course of a lifetime, because home is a place to pause, take stock, and fill up the depleted store for the next round.

The prevailing metaphor used in lifespan psychology is that of a person on a developmental journey. But over time, some parts of us remain constant and some change: "We never leave home entirely behind. We grow and become both by letting go and holding on, leaving and staying, journeying and abiding. A good life is a balance of home and pilgrimage."[50] Coming home is the outcome in life we yearn for. Prone to wandering like strangers from the path of authenticity, we believe when Aimee Mann sings "you will come to save me"[51] because in our very depths we know there is One who will find us and take us home. Banishment is the oldest fear in the book – the threat of exile, excommunication, Adam and Eve expelled to "east of Eden" (Genesis 3: 24), Snow

[49] Thomas Stearns Eliot, *Little Gidding*(accessed Feb 16th 2008); available from http://www.quotationspage.com/quote/37064.html.
[50] Laurent A. Parks Daloz and others, *Common Fire: Leading Lives of Commitment in a Complex World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), 31.
[51] Aimee Mann, *Save Me*(1999, accessed Feb 4th 2008); available from http://www.lyricsmania.com/lyrics/aimee_mann_lyrics_4419/magnolia_[soundtrack]_lyrics_14112/save_me_lyrics_163801.html.

White forever lost in the hostile woods. But like Snow White who finds a safe and loving dwelling place with seven unlikely characters, new homes can be made when return seems impossible. Of course, for many, home on earth is preparation for our ultimate home.

5.1 Pedagogical principle of homecoming

The configuration of homecoming leads to three pedagogical principles. To begin, it recognizes that spirituality is a human universal. We cannot but bring our spiritual selves to every encounter, including education. Ignatian spirituality is particularly appropriate to the school setting, because it can be adapted regardless of what "faith home" a person inhabits. Ignatius' experiences led him to "find God in all things," and to his astounding statement that "the world is our home." [52] Thus Jesuit spirituality extends to every person willing to lead a good life, no matter what religious tradition (if any) they consider home. O'Malley argues that the text of the *Exercises* was not meant to communicate any special theological viewpoint; it originated in the author's religious experience, well before he had any theological education.[53]

Second, when we know and appreciate the home where we start from, when we are secure in the place we are standing, we can lift our eyes to the wider horizon. Home engenders a sense of belonging which helps us to feel at home in the world, or to appreciate a sort of world-home with open doors. But it is not idealistic or utopian; this home faces the reality that sometimes the world invades, for instance through war, racial injustice, adverse circumstances, poverty, printed or electronic media. Cultivating a sense of home gives us a vantage point. It allows us to step back for the long view:

[52] O'Malley, "Some Distinctive Characteristics of Jesuit Spirituality in the Sixteenth Century," 9-11.
[53] See No. 15 of the Introductory Explanations to the *Spiritual Exercises*.

We plant the seeds that one day will grow,
We water seeds already planted
knowing they hold future promise.[54]

For teachers, there is liberation in realizing that they can't do everything. Even Moses, that giant of the Torah, stopped short of the Promised Land. The Kingdom is already, but ever not yet as well.

Finally, a principle arises regarding our responsibility to our environmental home. We have been given a gracious, bountiful home on this planet. A feature of this home is our partnership with God, laboring in creation. Daring and daunting, it shoulders us with a responsibility for thoughtful stewardship. This involves, for instance, examining our role in the effects of economic policies that leaves one half of the world living below the poverty line, or the environmental disregard that bequeaths only the quagmire to our children. It asks how do we exercise our partnership with God and challenges us to take a long hard look at ourselves as co-workers in the vineyard. Regardless of whether we see this force as an energy, essence of nature, a mystery of movement, or a personal God walking in the cool of the evening, it demands attention.

5.2 Praxis implications of homecoming

An appreciation of home: The configuration of homecoming implies a praxis that constantly brings people to their authentic personhood, home to their own true selves. To be one's own authentic person means returning to one's convictions and foundations, family and faith, but not in a regressive way, as if we have never been away. Once we have left home, we can never come back unchanged, but a good teacher can teach in a

[54] Archbishop Oscar Romero, quoted by Center for Ignatian Spirituality, *What Are We? An Introduction to Boston College and Its Jesuit and Catholic Tradition* (Boston: Boston College, 2002).

way that returns people to their soul selves, not naively, but with critique. They can teach so that people appreciate the home they come from and the values it holds dear, to draw life but not be limited by it. This pedagogical principle implies a praxis of appreciating and gently questioning the ecologies of people's homesteads, including their families and their roles within their families. It is particularly important that young people learn to both value and critique what their parents pass on, with an openness to learn from their culture and yet not be held bound by it.

For many of us, home means traditions. These might be personal, family, or religious – something we want to keep close or understand more fully. Tradition seems to be a powerful antidote to the rootlessness and deep insecurity of contemporary society, because it brings with it a sense of purpose, identity and meaning. Teachers need to cultivate an attitude of openness and appreciation for tradition - conservative (so they become reliable trustees of their heritage) and liberal (to question and build upon tradition to bring new life and vitality), and for celebration. However, because tradition can blind as well as give insight; keeping it relevant and alive calls for critical reflection or what Ignatius would have called discernment. Whatever we study can be constantly reinterpreted – with critique and creativity. Educators need to invite personal appropriation of tradition to life.[55] Finally, if we have a responsibility to our larger home, schools can intentionally foster an ecological consciousness as one aspect of justice.

At home in and beyond the school: Of course the first place teachers and students must feel at home is in their schools. This challenges schools to intentionally create an ethos of mutual respect, caring, and productive learning. It calls on colleagues and leaders to recognize and develop the potential of participants; to foster a sense that they

[55] Groome, *Educating for Life: A Spiritual Vision for Every Teacher and Parent*, 257-262.

are at home in the profession - that they 'can-do' what good teachers do; and finally nurturing in themselves the ability to recognize justice and injustice. But for many, the immediate school environment becomes too small, and in addition to doing our jobs well, we find ourselves reaching out to society with a larger, more global awareness, in order to make our home in the wider commons. This pedagogical praxis calls on the school to be something of an *alma mater* – a holding and sustaining space – for educators, not just for students. But it also asks schools to be a place of release and return; a place from whence we can make forays into the public sphere and return to reflect on the experience. It challenges the school community to act as a space where members can both grow roots and find their wings, to feel at home enough to venture forth with increasing confidence, compassion, and openness, in order to contribute to the wider commons.

Being at home ultimately means being at home with ourselves, seeing from within, using our own eyes rather than someone else's. We ask our questions and seek our way in harmony with the world, from a paradoxical place of confidence and humility. This brings us full circle, back to the configuration of authentic personhood, resonant of the community at hand and at large, all embedded in the matrix of God's universal presence.

Conclusion

I propose these five configurations as a pentagon of a spiritual pedagogy. The holistic center of a spirituality of the educator balances only by means of all five points. For instance, personal care can become self-centered without the call to justice; detachment can mutate into emotional retreat without discernment of moral values; striving for excellence can misfire into a grandiose pride without an appreciation of

God's creation and a gratitude eager to serve. Authentic self affects and is affected by my relationship in my immediate community, my ability and willingness to reach beyond my comfort zone, and the home that I construct and to which I return in order to make sense of the world and my experiences in it. This dynamic overlap holds true for each of the configurations, with the primacy and personal experience of transcendence holding them together. The five points of this spiritual pedagogy are in some ways distinguishable, but in many ways are like the five digits of the human hand. Versatile, and creative, they are part of the whole, connected to a larger limb, which in turn connects them to the life within.

Of course, this spiritual pedagogy is not a simple recipe for success. I am not suggesting that crafting a spiritual pedagogy is the answer to every disillusioned teacher, unruly classroom, or exhausted educator. Indeed, crafting such a pedagogy is pointless unless it stands some chance of implementation. This is the focus of chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Putting a spiritual pedagogy to work and suggested practices

Dumbledore: *"'It is our choices Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities.'"*

(J.K. Rowling, from *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*)

Introduction

Having identified five configurations of a spiritual pedagogy, Chapter 5 examines how teachers and schools can appropriate them as consistent practice. I will propose some practices that help implement the five configurations of a spiritual pedagogy in life-giving ways. Because the pedagogy I have described reflects the Ignatian tradition, the practices I suggest are drawn primarily but not exclusively from the same source. The practices emerge from two key questions:

a) What practices does this spiritual pedagogy ask of the teacher, and

b) What practices does this spiritual pedagogy ask of the school community and its leaders?

Of course, these questions are not distinct. Even as schools try to meet the needs of teachers, they must remain alert to the changing nature of human need; when schools provide support services, teachers should avail of at least some of them and through contribution and critique, work towards their improvement. Three caveats are important here: practices to support a spiritual pedagogy must be invitational; any attempt to foist them on teachers would be counter-productive. Second, these practices can work to help people make sense of their lives but must eschew any attempt to exercise control over how they live them. Finally, this approach is not a panacea for all problems of teachers and schools; rather, it is a helpful resource.

It is clear from the overlap and dynamic interaction of the five configurations described in chapter 4 that many practices which sustain one configuration will also serve the other four. In other words, as with the configurations themselves, there is considerable interconnection between the practices which support them. I begin chapter 5 with a review of why Ignatian spirituality is an appropriate source for such practices, even in secular school settings. I go on to name and describe some general practices that can shore up the five configurations of a spiritual pedagogy. I follow with some specific suggestions, first for the teacher and finally for the leadership of the school community.

Ignatian spirituality in a secular world

In today's pluralistic world, it is imperative to note that Ignatian spirituality can and has been adapted outside the Christian tradition. The Preamble to the *Constitutions* asserts the basic paradigm of "the interior law of charity and love that the Holy Spirit writes and engraves upon hearts."[1] This interior law is true for all human beings. One does not have to be Jesuit, Catholic, or Christian to know God, to experience God's action in their lives, or to feel consolation, desolation or however we name the movement of some higher Spirit in our hearts.

Accommodation to persons, places, and circumstances was and remains a cornerstone of Ignatian spirituality.[2] O'Malley points to Ribadeneira's dealing with the Jesuits at Louvain who feared he would make them conform to the Roman way as a lovely example from the Ignatian tradition of cultural accommodation; Ribadeneira

[1] *Const*., #134.
[2] See for instance *Const.,* #136, 395, 585.

assured the superior that no universally binding format was possible or desirable.[3] Of course, the most creative and probably well-known illustration of this adaptation is Matteo Ricci's accommodation to Chinese culture.[4]

Ignatian spirituality can provide a method for accommodating teachers of cultural diversity and religious pluralism. This, according to Michael Amaladoss, is because it avoids Christo-monism; God's action is not limited to what God does in Jesus. The religious experience of Ignatius left him with a great respect for the experiences of every person. The *Spiritual Exercises* offer a framework and spiritual method rather than theological content. They were always intended for a broad audience, far more extensive than those in or wishing to join the Society. Indeed, it would be a mistake to assume that the *Exercises* were conceived of as something particular to Catholics, or only directed by Jesuit experts. Their social implications appeal across religious and cultural boundaries, for example through the appreciation of creation and our ensuing responsibility to our environmental home. Amaladoss concludes that encounter with other cultures is good for the *Spiritual Exercises* and vice versa.[5] Thus, Ignatian spirituality can be adopted and

[3] Pedro de Ribadeneira SJ (1527-1611) was sent on a mission to Belgium as Ignatius's emissary in 1555. He maintained an active presence in the Low Countries for the next five years, until his health began to fail.
[4] Matteo Ricci SJ (1522-1610) could speak Chinese as well as read and write classical Chinese (*wenyan*), the literary language of scholars and officials. Added to this, he was known for his appreciation of the indigenous culture of the Chinese. During his research he discovered that Chinese culture was strongly influenced by Confucian values. He decided that his Western habits (for instance, his mode of attire and many Roman liturgical rites) had to be adapted to fit Chinese culture in order to make Christianity attractive to the Chinese.
[5] Michael Amaladoss, "Inculturation and Ignatian Spirituality," *Ignatian Spirituality and Mission, The Way Supplement 79* (Spring 1994). Amaladoss is not alone in promoting Ignatian spirituality as an instrument of accommodating cultural and religious pluralism. David Lonsdale, for instance, counts as an interesting phenomenon the movement of Ignatian spirituality from the ecclesial center to the margins; many people who partake in and give the *Exercises* have a peripheral or tangential relationship with the established Church, and with any particular Christian parish or community. This invites ongoing, open conversation. Lonsdale, like Amaladoss, welcomes the creative tensions inevitable in adapting Ignatian spirituality to meet pluralistic settings and circumstances. See Lonsdale, *Eyes to See, Ears to Hear: An Introduction to Ignatian Spirituality*.

adapted as life-giving practices to sustain the vocation of the teacher, regardless of the faith tradition, if any, of the teacher or the school.

Practices to support a spiritual pedagogy

Chapter 4 described the five configurations of a spiritual pedagogy. In the context of putting this pedagogy to work, these can be articulated as: an appreciation of the world as God's creation, fostering authentic personhood, upbuilding community, journeying in vocation, and homecoming to ourselves and our commitments. This section describes some general practices to support these configurations and thus a spiritual pedagogy.

1 Discernment

The ability to discern - the ability and disposition to reflect on our daily lives, to weigh evidence, to discern what we should (or should not) do, and to decide accordingly - is among the most valued gifts of the human condition. The gift of the wise is the ability to "discern between good and evil." Solomon is rewarded when, of all the gifts he might request, he asks for a 'discerning judgment" (1 Kings 3: 6-12). One does not have to use a particular model or technique in order to practice discernment. The Christian faith does not endow us with any unique or new faculty; the Spirit is active in all people, whether they recognize that divine presence or not. Nonetheless, one of the greatest gifts a teacher can bring to a school is the ability to discern and to model discernment.

The Ignatian approach to discernment has been hugely influential.[6] Although it is deeply rational and promotes a critical kind of educating - encouraging students to think for themselves - the Ignatian model explores discernment not merely in a rational way.

[6] See for example Dorr, *Faith at Work: A Spirituality of Leadership*.

For instance, feelings of consolation or desolation play a prominent role; memory and imagination – what Antonio de Nicolas terms the "powers of imagining" – are central.[7]

A helpful tool of discernment, the Ignatian examination of conscience[8] is grounded in the assumptions that everybody makes good choices and mistakes, we can learn from both, and we have limitless capacity for growth and development. Every discernment is an opportunity to center oneself and regain sight of the big picture. For teachers, this might start with regularly asking oneself: Did I teach the last class with loving interest in my students, or did I just go through the motions? Did I engage my and their imaginations today, or settle for a "good enough to get by" effort?

Forms of this practice have already made their way into the circles of teacher education. For instance, William Ayers advises teachers to end each day asking themselves how they could have done better with this student or that situation. "Growth

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[7] Antonio T. DeNicolas, *Powers of Imagining: A Philosophical Hermeneutic of Imagining through the Collected Works of Ignatius De Loyola* (New York: State University of New York, 1986). For a fuller treatment of the importance of memory, reason, and imagination see 5.3.

[8] The Ignatian examination of conscience is known and henceforth referred to as 'the examen.' By habitually engaging in this type of reflection over time, a Jesuit hopes to become a contemplative in action i.e. one who finds God in everything – prayer, work, recreation. This mode of reflection reviews the movements of God in our day and asks us to look at the quality of our response to God. It builds on two realities of life: first, we have so much to be thankful for; second, we have some areas of life where we need to forgive and be forgiven. The examen is generally modeled as a 5 step process, taking about 10-15 minutes as follows:

- I give thanks for the many ways God has met me today – for instance, in the work I accomplished and the people I encountered;
- I ask for the insight to understand the invitation to draw closer to God and gain a better understanding of myself – a graced understanding of the day;
- I perceive the times during the day when I felt close to God and those when I felt distanced; I review the feelings the circumstances and encounters of the day provoked – both positive and negative, painful and pleasing;
- I notice the patterns that are emerging, for example, are there difficulties that I keep trying to avoid, when was I most emotionally engaged, what people, places or occasions bring out the worst/the best in me, what am I coming to realize as God's will for me?
- I look toward tomorrow and ask for the grace to live in forgiveness, truthfulness, and service. I look ahead out of the blessings and challenges of today to live with a growing trust in God's gift to me to live my life lovingly in the future.

I have devised this mode of conducting the examen from sources such as Center for Ignatian Spirituality, *What Are We? An Introduction to Boston College and Its Jesuit and Catholic Tradition*, 113-117, and, Dennis Hamm SJ, "Rummaging for God: Praying Backward through Your Day," *America* (May 14th 2007).

requires doubt. Begin each day forgiving yourself for your failures and shortcomings . . . Without self-forgiveness, we risk burning out."[9] Before we can achieve authentic personhood, we need to accept who we are and what distortions and false attachments have crept into our lives. That is why the examination of conscience can be a very helpful practice for educators.

Discernment for teachers calls for a particular kind of commitment within one's teaching and means more than doing a daily examen. This includes ongoing discernment of vocation that in practice can take on new and unexpected hues. Of course the culture and ethos of a school is vital for supporting a spiritual pedagogy that prioritizes discernment. As Aristotle noted, a virtue such as courage or loyalty is found where that virtue is valued and practiced. If a teacher's vocation does not find resonance in the environment and pedagogy of a school, it will be hard to sustain it. But if a new teacher comes to a school where discernment is part and parcel of how things are done, then they are more likely to embrace the practice themselves.

1.1 Supporting teachers to learn and use the skills of personal discernment

Personal reflection: There is little doubt that teaching is influenced by teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and values.[10] Personal discernment of these factors can be done through practices such as journaling, reading that promotes reflection on the human condition, and engaging in daily reflection. Nieto suggests that constructing "autobiographies" is one of the key ways in which teachers can think seriously about

[9] Ayers, "The Hope and Practice of Teaching," 275.
[10] Nieto, *What Keeps Teachers Going?* 86.

their craft and themselves. Tracing the patterns of one's life by committing experiences and reflections to paper is a time-honored spiritual practice; teacher autobiographies have much the same function. Parker Palmer also points to the value of inner work through the skills of journaling and reflective reading.

Personal discernment can also involve teachers at the end of the day or after a particular event asking themselves question such as: What today went well; What did not go well; Where today did I feel myself doing a good job or receive positive feedback; Where did I feel inadequate or negative? Even and especially in the first few weeks of school, novice and veteran teachers alike can try to find a few moments for reflection each day – morning or evening, preferably free from the rush and rouse of the busy school environment, and ask themselves what did I learn in school today – about myself, my students, my ways of relating to people in different circumstances; what do I expect from myself as a teacher, what do others expect of me; what am I able to give at this point, what are my limitations, and what do I need to take care of myself?[11] Through honest reflection, teachers can become familiar with behavior patterns that add to or draw from their own spiritual resources – from their souls.

Mentoring: Mentors are guides in learning the discernment process. In the context of a spiritual pedagogy, a mentor is someone more experienced and enthusiastic who helps the teacher move from unreflective survival to reflective living out of her/his vocation. Mentoring can involve a range of practices from helping new teachers acclimatize to the working environment, to introducing veteran teachers to new technologies. Mentoring structures facilitate teacher interaction and reinforce interdependence; they help to build up community. But mentoring in its fullest sense can

[11] This practice is an adaptation of the Ignatian examen.

play a spiritual role. Mentors can help teachers sort out vital questions such as why they want to teach or who they want students to become, and can help teachers to name their stories - not just what is past but what shape they want their lives to take, personally, professionally, and vocationally, and likewise the lives of their students.

Mentoring can move beyond designated figures to mentoring environments that include strategic influences such as a diverse group of friends and colleagues, a means of sharing challenges and hopes, and meaningful experiences of the world outside the school. The Peace Corps, travel, some graduate and professional programs, the feminist and civil rights movements and some other jobs can provide a mentoring environment.[12] So too can good movies, drama, and any kind of art that portrays the human condition with understanding and empathy and heightens the teacher's compassion.

Inquiry groups[13] for vocation and discernment can work with or in place of a mentor. The focus of the group is to work out how we become men and women for whom discernment is a habit. Teaching beyond a knowledge society means teaching to live a life rather than merely earn a living; this relies on a holistic sense of living, including what is spiritual. For Andy Hargreaves, reaching this stage is a matter of personal growth, not formal learning; it can be the bulwark against the downside of endless change.[14] Supportive peer groups can also challenge teachers' perceptions and biases without moralizing or blaming.

While there is little doubt that personal and vocational reflection is supported by healthy structures and community, discernment also needs work in solitude and silence.

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[12] See Parks Daloz and others, *Common Fire: Leading Lives of Commitment in a Complex World*, 44-48.
[13] The term 'inquiry groups', taken from teacher education literature, usually refers to teachers gathering regularly to inquire into best practice for teaching-learning techniques. My contention is that inquiry groups can be adapted as supportive gatherings for discussing, discerning, and sustaining vocation.
[14] Hargreaves, *Teaching in the Knowledge Society: Education in the Age of Insecurity*, 65.

Silence and solitude: The biblical wisdom reviewed in chapter 2 points to the importance of silence and solitude. This is not the busy silence that surrounds us as we study, grade papers, or run errands, our heads filled with the thoughts, learning, or worries of the day. In that context, solitude becomes isolation or loneliness, community becomes the crowd. Solitude is neither loneliness nor alienation; it is the time we give to be alone – with God and our deepest selves – to assess and commit to our desires and vocations. This is the intentional quiet that is needed to follow the patterns of our hearts, which leads to interiority, truthfulness, and even self-confrontation; this is the silence and solitude T.S. Eliot prays for with the line "Teach us to sit still."[15]

We need to create time to pause, reflect, and assess, and we need to learn the value of silence. The absence of deliberate, regular time for reflection can lead us to a place of self-deceit.[16] I agree with Gregory Pierce that spirituality is not exclusive to the realm of solitude, silence, and simplicity; yet intentionally making time for such space in our noisy, crowded, and complex lives is important so that we are alert to God's gentle communication in our daily lives.[17]

The challenge for teachers today is becoming comfortable with silence. Writing for educators, Parker Palmer asserts that we avoid silence and solitude because we are terrified of being engulfed by internal darkness – doubts, anxieties, guilts, recriminations and regrets. But if we stay with it

> confronting ourselves with patience, bearing the pain that comes as we withdraw our projections from the world and find their source in ourselves. . . Solitude

[15] Thomas Stearns Eliot, *Ash Wednesday*(accessed Mar 17th 2008); available from www.poemhunter.com/poem/ash-wednesday.
[16] See for instance Katz, *The Spirit of Prophecy: An Examination of the Prophetic Call*, Charles M. Shelton, *Achieving Moral Health: An Exercise Plan for Your Conscience* (New York: Crossroad, 2000).
[17] Gregory F.A. Pierce, *Spirituality@Work: 10 Ways to Balance Your Life on-the-Job* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2001), 7-16.

> eventually offers a quite gift of grace, a gift that comes whenever we are able to face ourselves honestly: the gift of acceptance, of compassion, for who we are, as we are.[18]

Welcoming silence and solitude means intentionally removing ourselves to a place of quiet where we can engage in self-time, away from the distractions of our daily routines, roles and reliances. Such engagement gives us knowledge of ourselves and allows us to receive our personhood as it is and can become.

1.2 Communal discernment[19]

In recent leadership research, the move from a parliamentary style of debate to a process of group discernment means that a deep spirituality pervades some contemporary models of decision making.[20] As novel as this approach may appear, it is at the heart of Ignatian spirituality. In the *Spiritual Exercises*, Ignatius suggests a series of dispositions that will help discernment such as freedom to let God act in my and others' lives, a balanced detachment toward one's own treasured opinions and priorities, and a willingness and ability to take the time and space to reflect personally, meet, and discuss. The belief that God can work directly in oneself and just as truly in others is found in many places in the *Exercises*.[21] In schools, a process of communal discernment can enable teachers to have a real sense of involvement in setting the direction of the school and in owning and implementing the major policy decisions that are taken.

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[18] Palmer, *To Know as We Are Known: Education as a Spiritual Journey*, 124.
[19] Although a detailed set of guidelines for personal discernment is clear from the *Spiritual Exercises*, this is not the case for a formal process of communal discernment. However, since 1970 with the renewal of interest in Ignatian spirituality, some serious attempts have been made to work out a structured form of communal discernment.
[20] Dorr, *Faith at Work: A Spirituality of Leadership*, 27.
[21] See for instance *Spiritual Exercises* #15, #22.

Communal discernment, in the Ignatian model, is not an alternative to personal discernment; everyone is expected to reach a place of personal discernment on any given issue. But neither is it working out a compromise. The process involves deep personal reflection on the issue, noticing movements of consolation and desolation, holding back from making a personal decision, for or against, until everyone shares the outcome of their personal discernment with the group. There is no bargaining or arguing. Instead, the process involves moving toward consensus through the sharing of spiritual feelings. Further, this approach reduces the risk of polarization and expects all members of the group to indicate where they stand. This is often lost in parliamentary style debates, where one group of participants or point of view ends up dominating, with others often silenced.

However, many disadvantages also apply: to begin, it presumes that all participants are both willing and able to engage in personal discernment. Prerequisites can sometimes feel like tall orders, for instance, finding the courage to speak up, and overcoming fears, irritations, and old hostilities. The demands of timetabling means it has to occur over fairly tightly organized time periods, yet when used properly, this process can be very time-consuming. Finally, without good facilitation by someone who can maintain a trusting, safe environment and enable *all* participants to fully engage in the sharing process, participants can tend to fall back on a more rational-discursive style.[22]

Whether communal discernment takes place in formal or informal settings and structures, facilitators need to create an atmosphere of reflection, sharing, and careful listening. Of course, for communal discernment to stand some chance of success, it

[22] See Dorr, *Faith at Work: A Spirituality of Leadership*, 134-137.

assumes the presence of healthy community, even as it helps to nurture such community. Forming community, according to Howard Gray, is crucial to convert the group from the kind of individualism which impedes authentic common discernment.[23] This brings us to our next set of practices – school community building.

2. Community formation

An inability to accept otherness without being threatened by it is essential, in today's world perhaps more that ever. Our deepest calling is not to observe from the sidelines; rather it is "personal participation in the organic community of human and nonhuman being."[24] Community formation in schools is a central task. Susan Moore-Johnson warns that because schools vary so much, no preparation program can sufficiently ready student-teachers to succeed in every site.[25] Therefore, schools must be prepared to support all the teachers they hire. Nieto too is concerned for this type of sustenance; she challenges the perception of teaching as a private enterprise and lifts up the cost when a sense of community is missing.[26] In order to work towards community formation while at the same time supporting the *magis* in teachers' lives, schools can offer opportunities for both personal, holistic growth and renewal, and for professional growth. Of course, personal and professional support is also central to vocational sustenance.

Opportunities for personal growth and renewal: Teachers, like all people, need to affirm and be affirmed. There are great possibilities and potentials in all persons. Just as

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[23] Gray SJ, "Foundations."
[24] Palmer, *To Know as We Are Known: Education as a Spiritual Journey*, 53-54.
[25] Susan Moore Johnson, *Finders and Keepers: Helping New Teachers Survive and Thrive in Our Schools* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 267.
[26] Nieto, *What Keeps Teachers Going?* chapter 9.

teachers are advised to relate with learners as "agent-subjects in relationship",[27] so teachers must be acknowledged likewise. This has implications for how we see the person and the role of the teacher. For instance, it flies in the face of a model which sees the teacher as dispenser of scripted, pre-packaged curriculum. Rather than raising the anchor on the teacher when the classroom door closes, expecting them to sail the ship alone, every teacher needs support – personal as well as professional. In turn the teacher needs to commit to human freedom, and the rights and responsibilities which ensue, for instance freedom from inner compulsions and false attachments, and freedom for becoming fully alive to fulfill their responsibilities. Although inner work is deeply personal, it is not necessarily a private matter: inner work can be helped along in community. The key to this form of community is holding the paradox of having relationships in which we protect each other's aloneness, rather than "setting each other straight."[28] Practices that can help with this is finding and listing the 'blessings' in our work, and identifying moments when we are aware of God's presence.

Education of the teacher does not stop and cannot be expected to stop once a teacher earns a qualification and gains employment. The school environment can provide opportunities for teachers to develop their talents and potential – to become the best teachers they can be. It should work out ways to call forth from teachers as well as students the very best that they have to offer in all dimensions of their lives. It needs to try to recognize and meet the needs and abilities of every teacher. Many teachers bring gifts, desires, and needs far beyond their subject expertise. The school can provide

[27] Groome, *Educating for Life: A Spiritual Vision for Every Teacher and Parent*, chapter 2.
[28] Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation*, 92.

opportunities for teachers to rejoice in these gifts and share them with students and colleagues.

Opportunities for professional growth: The school community needs to provide regular opportunities where teachers can meet and learn from one another, such as subject area meetings where teachers can keep abreast of developments in their areas and share up-to-date readings. It can also try to help teachers assume responsibility for their own ongoing education and vocational discernment, and to foster inter-dependent learning. In turn, teachers should try to plan with vision and purpose in a collaborative manner, prioritizing care for students and colleagues. They need to exchange ideas and experiences of teaching with colleagues as a means of broadening their repertoire of teaching methods and techniques and of deepening collegial relationships.

Reflection days are significant here. Members of the school community need to engage in discerning how the school lacks freedom to grow into an even better institution and what can be done to confront whatever obstacles are in the way of freedom for all. The school can prioritize enrichment days for teachers to reflect together on school policy, learn from one another, and strengthen relationality. When the school helps members to assume meaningful roles, members of the school community are more likely to work together to build a collaborative community.

Induction programs: School induction programs can gently foster opportunities for growth by introducing the notion from the beginning that teachers are always "becoming", so they need to know more about who they are and what they stand for through conversation and collaboration with peers, and through deep reflection about themselves, their vocation, and their craft. Programs can broaden to include questions of

why as well as the what and how of teaching, and to help new teachers know more about the students they teach. When a new member joins the group, others need to be open to what they bring, even if its means starting a re-visioning process again.

2.1 Learning communities

In the field of teacher education, much work is being done at present on forming school based learning communities.[29] School based learning communities are those that emphasize collaborative work among teachers to reflect on their teaching practice. According to McLaughlin and Talbert, school based learning communities build and manage knowledge to improve practice, create shared language, vision, and standards for practice, and sustain school culture.[30] Their research found that these communities both enforce norms of professionalism by encouraging a strong service ethic to all students and commitment to continual learning and improvement, and organize for professional learning and equity. Unlike beginning teachers in typical high schools who struggle on their own and are often assigned the toughest assignments, teachers begin their careers with significant and sustained support. Beginning teachers participate in department and faculty meetings and are folded into school culture and community practice.[31]

We need an expanded notion of school based learning communities beyond technique or even expertise to scaffold the inner work of teachers - sustain vocation and re-claim central motivators such as relationality and the desire to serve. Further, these

[29] See for example Hargreaves, *Teaching in the Knowledge Society: Education in the Age of Insecurity*, Milbrey W. McLaughlin and Joan E. Talbert, *Building School-Based Teacher Learning Communities: Professional Strategies to Improve Student Achievement*, ed. Patricia A. Wasley, Ann Lieberman, and Joseph P. McDonald, The Series on School Reform (New York & London: Teachers College, 2006). Such communities are not necessarily confined to the school, or to immediate colleagues.
[30] McLaughlin and Talbert, *Building School-Based Teacher Learning Communities: Professional Strategies to Improve Student Achievement*, 5-8.
[31] Ibid., 25.

communities need to go beyond inculturating beginning teachers by encouraging them to bring something new to school culture and practice, and to develop a consciousness of connection among all teachers in the community. This expanded notion of school based learning communities can be realized through good conversation, insightful reading including spiritual works, and regular shared reflection opportunities. Sharing knowledge and expertise is very important in teaching circles, but so too is quality reflection on all aspects of teaching, including ongoing discernment of vocation in shared conversation. This requires a 'holding environment' or home that is based on trust, mutual support, and gentle challenge.

Culture regimes in schools exert considerable influence on creating a holding environment for professional learning communities. Hargreaves warns against two types of regimes. In the first type, which he terms 'permissive individualism', teachers teach alone, away from scrutiny, in insulated classrooms. When they pursue further study and inservice training it is done individually, with little opportunity to share this learning with others. Without opportunities to benefit from the encouragement and experience of colleagues, permissive individualism creates barriers to widespread and sustained sharing and innovation. The second is a culture of 'contrived collegiality', where collaboration is imposed from above and becomes forced and artificial – a prison of micro-management that constrains true collegiality. Although cognizant that results cannot be guaranteed as genuine rather than superficial, Hargreaves favors collaborative cultures, where teachers are encouraged to work together and to interact more.[32] These form the basis of successful personal learning communities and promote teamwork, inquiry, and continuous learning. Policy can promote strong professional learning communities

[32] Hargreaves, *Teaching in the Knowledge Society: Education in the Age of Insecurity*, 165.

within and beyond schools by including it in areas such as leadership development, providing seed-money for self-learning (i.e. within the school community itself), fostering professional networks and encouraging professional self-regulation, and by communicating that there are many ways to excel as a teacher, not just one.[33]

A spiritual pedagogy sees a learning community of teachers as a place to honor the role of the teacher and as a space to work toward holistic development and consistent support of all teachers. It believes that if teachers are in a positive place personally and professionally, the whole school benefits. It calls for a particular practice in community formation - good conversation - which places the teacher-as-learner at the center of these learning communities.

2.2 Successful conversation

Successful conversation is essential to collaborative work, communal discernment, and learning communities. By this I mean honest exchange, speaking our truth quietly and clearly, and careful, non-judgmental listening to others, even to those who do not share our views or values; they too have their stories and wisdom. Continuing education and vocational support of teachers demands an approach of good conversation rather than prescription. Further, paying attention to the language world teachers are co-creating among themselves and with their students is imperative. Jurgen Habermas outlines four aspects of successful conversation: participants commit to pursue the truth, to be honest, to avoid attempts to manipulate, dominate or control the outcome; and, never to force an agreement – only to use genuine persuasion.[34] Groome suggests we can construct good conversation by asking good questions, inviting sharing of

[33] Ibid., 175.
[34] Jurgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), vol.1, 285 ff.

responses and reflections on them, fostering genuine listening, and testing out with others what one is 'coming to see' and ensuing decisions.[35]

3. Social justice opportunities

Like the demands of teaching today, the work of the early Jesuits required capability and flexibility. Ignatius of Loyola designed six experiences (experiments) to help develop Jesuit novices into ministerial life.[36] The novitiate experiments were ways to help young Jesuits gain the ability to live this kind of life, to shore up both their own vocation and commitment to help others. They were intended to effect a harmony between the way people live and orient their lives and the kind of vocational presence they bring to their work. They still constitute very useful practices in a spiritual pedagogy. While these experiments certainly held religious significance for the early Jesuits and remain the formation model for Jesuits today, it is their importance as a tool for providing social justice opportunities within a spiritual pedagogy that I focus on here. I collapse elements of these experiments into a practice that is particularly relevant today: commitment to the struggle for a more humane world by reflecting on and prioritizing issues of justice within and beyond the school.

Critical consciousness: Teaching is more than a matter of technical skill and competence; it involves personal, moral, and political choices. Teachers must be allowed to question and critique and to encourage their students to do likewise. The school community should encourage critical appraisal of the various forces present in society and strive toward freedom from distorted or blinkered perceptions of reality, warped

[35] See Groome, *Educating for Life: A Spiritual Vision for Every Teacher and Parent*, 198-200.
[36] These six experiments include teaching catechetics, preaching and hearing confessions, thirty days of spiritual exercises made under the guidance of an experienced spiritual director, work in a hospital, a pilgrimage, and service within the community.

values, rigid attitudes, or surrender to narrow ideologies. To this end, the school needs to prioritize learning to recognize and deal with the influences that promote or limit freedom. This includes fostering critical reflection and evaluation of emerging postmodern practices. The school can invite its members to consider the overall purpose of the institute and situate it and themselves in the wider context of global issues such as racism, sexism, ecological degradation, and social injustice. Forming a critical consciousness also involves honest and ongoing personal and communal reflection. We "complete the curriculum by critiquing ourselves as teachers, since those attitudes we have learned through time and institutions die hard."[37] For Pedro Arrupe, we move from the principle of justice through love to the level of reality by cultivating in ourselves three attitudes: live more simply, no profit from unjust sources, and recognize our privilege even where there is victim-hood and resolve to be agents of change (of unjust structures) in society.

According to developmental psychology, factors that can jumpstart the questioning of assumptions include positive relationship with someone at the next developmental stage, some sort of spiritual encounter,[38] and the experience of leaving home - what Daloz et al describe as a "constructive, enlarging engagement with otherness."[39] This type of experience provokes examinations of self, background, and values. Schools can provide age and experience-appropriate opportunities for constructive, enlarging engagement with otherness whereby teachers can learn to follow and understand the dynamics of history, social structures, and culture.

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[37] Harris, *Women and Teaching: Themes for a Spirituality of Pedagogy*, 65.
[38] It is noteworthy that Fowler credits his experience of making the Spiritual Exercises for moving him from stage 4 to stage 5 of his own faith development. See James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1981), 186.
[39] Parks Daloz and others, *Common Fire: Leading Lives of Commitment in a Complex World*, 63.

Critical consciousness demands ongoing discernment primarily of the interlocking networks of society and how they work to favor some and disadvantage others. For teachers, opportunities for community to gather, to converse, and to discern through issues of social justice are central. These should be carefully chosen so as not to overwhelm but to provide constructive, enlarging engagement with otherness. When teachers come to recognize opportunities in their work to promote justice, it nourishes the desire to serve and acts as a sustaining force. Fostering an environment of trust and belonging is critical, where each member regardless of age, background or beliefs knows that they can (and do) make a difference.

Service program opportunities: Constructive, enlarging engagements with otherness can be cultivated through service projects that build on self-gifting impulses. A service component as part and parcel of the curriculum can be expanded beyond students, and even beyond teachers as leaders of student groups, to cater for teachers themselves in age and context appropriate ways. This implies both direct, immediate experiences of real social outreach, and opportunities to reflect on these experiences and share their reflections.

Almost every spiritual tradition accents the importance of social justice. It is a mistake to limit this to 'outsider' movements – large, organized groups that protest high profile, international issues such as torture and treatment of prisoners. Insider movements – where a localized population identifies and addresses its own concerns, even though these concerns may have wide implications, are available to every school.

Memory, reason, and imagination:[40] Encouraging teachers in this triune blend of memory, reason, and imagination is necessary if we are to see the myriad of shade and color in the world, "if we are ever to treat the objects of perception as symbolising . . . things other than themselves;"[41] if we are effectively and compassionately to read the patterns of human behaviour in the world – at home and abroad.

Critical reason is essential to the probing work of discernment. Creative imagination is central to moving toward a place of freedom from false attachments, to imagine alternatives, and the willingness and ability to live authentically. "It is, after all, not the known that powers us forward; it is, rather, peering into the unknown."[42] Imagination, in the Ignatian sense, is the ability to make images. Every person has to make their own – they cannot be simply borrowed. Remembering helps us connect the significance of what we teach and learn with our own life experiences and to recall and reconnect with "those who and that which has been forgotten, discarded or denied."[43]

Teaching and learning that engages memory, imagination, and critical reason allows us to pay attention to the conditions in which we now find ourselves, assess how

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[40] Memory, reason, and imagination are some of the most important components of a spiritual pedagogy. Augustine in his *Confessions* emphasises the unity of memory and imagination in coming to know the self and God. Groome's approach to education also stresses critical reason, memory, and creative imagination as key components. He sees critical reflection as constituted by all three facets. See Thomas H Groome, *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 1991), 90-99. Memory, reason, and imagination are central practices in the *Spiritual Exercises*. For instance, exercitants come to a realization of the patterns in their lives – both healthy and unhealthy patterns through extensive use of memory (particularly in the first week) and imagination (weeks 2-4).

Ignatius weaves a text that engages memory, employs reason, and extends imagination. The starting point of Ignatian imagining is always memory; the end point a type of experience that can be felt bodily. It leads the exercitant to experience and discern the spiritual affects of consolation and desolation, first through imaginative exercises, then in contemplating the God-made world around us, and finally at the heart of daily living. See DeNicolas, *Powers of Imagining: A Philosophical Hermeneutic of Imagining through the Collected Works of Ignatius De Loyola*, xxi-xxii.

[41] Mary Warnock, *Imagination* (London: Faber & Faber, 1976).

[42] Ayers, "The Hope and Practice of Teaching," 274.

[43] Harris, *Women and Teaching: Themes for a Spirituality of Pedagogy*, 31.

we came to be where we are, and reflect on the possible paths ahead. This is one way of "creating a "compass" to orient us as we move into the future."[44]

To conclude this section, I remind the reader of the overlapping nature of these three suggestions for putting a spiritual pedagogy to work. Just as the five configurations to sustain a spiritual pedagogy of chapter 4 dynamically interweave, so do the practices which sustain them. For instance, healthy school community is foundational to the practice of social justice, so that even if persons do not share the same faith backgrounds or set of religious beliefs, they have some common ground and agency in identifying and working towards issues of social justice. In turn, social justice requires that school culture reflects the belief that teachers are companions and collaborators, through efforts to build up and maintain healthy community and by encouraging teachers to actively participate and plan for the life of the school.

4. Cautions and Critiques

Resistance to change: The danger of fixity, of hanging on to "the way we do things here" is characteristic of most institutions. Schools and teachers need to be cautious of the resistance to change both in themselves and in the school community. Discernment is a resource that can help us deal with this threat. Growth and development occur when participants in the school community use the best resources available to them to reinterpret their vocation in a discerning way in the light of contemporary questions and needs.

Appropriate language: Because the language of faith and/or religion can be off-putting, language use in a spiritual pedagogy needs careful attention. For instance, rather

[44] Parks Daloz and others, *Common Fire: Leading Lives of Commitment in a Complex World*, 213.

than using the language of faith-inspired justice,[45] we can broaden the appeal by using the language of social justice and helping others. This reflects the language of social justice popular today with both scholars in Jesuit education and teacher educators.[46] At the same time, however, we need to be careful how we frame 'justice' so it is not confused with activism or entitlement. Without covenantal roots in union with some Higher Power, we are at risk of "becoming unreflecting crusaders and activists."[47] This is not the justice of Shylock, demanding its pound of flesh, nor is it the punishing justice of Le Gendarme Javert in *Les Miserables.*[48] As another example, the language of searching for "the will of God" may have negative overtones for some. One way to avoid this is to think of it as searching for the deepest desires of one's heart, because in a person of goodwill, it is actually God's desire for that person.[49]

Integration: One key goal of a spiritual pedagogy is integration of the five configurations of chapter 4. We have a tendency to dichotomize and compartmentalize; but there is an inherent danger in separating the inner life from action in the external world. David Lonsdale warns that Ignatian discernment, because of its focus in the history, needs, desires and 'inner' experience of persons may encourage 'private' forms of spirituality.[50] Instead, we must remember that the emphases are holistic, not one-sided, with the ultimate aim of discerning and sustaining vocation, and of integrating

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[45] For instance, this language, especially the term "faith that does justice," is very popular in Ignatian spirituality today.
[46] See chapters 1 and 2.
[47] Joseph Nangle, cited by Starratt, "Sowing Seeds of Faith and Justice (1980)," 112.
[48] And so it has been, and so it is written
On the doorway to Paradise
That those who falter and those who fall
Must pay the price.
From "Stars", Claude-Michel Schönberg and Alain Boublil, *Les Miserables (Musical)*(1980, accessed Mar 17th 2008); available from http://www.stlyrics.com/lyrics/lesmiserables/stars.htm.
[49] Dorr, *Faith at Work: A Spirituality of Leadership*, 112-114.
[50] Lonsdale, *Eyes to See, Ears to Hear: An Introduction to Ignatian Spirituality*, 212.

inner strength with the sociopolitical and economic realities of life. This was the accent and aim of the *Exercises* in their infancy.

Further, we must be aware and prepared for the reality of our own sinfulness. George Jantzen reminds us that

> the social and political policies that make for starving children, battered women and the evil of rising fascism are still there unchallenged as people learn through prayer to find the tranquility to live with corrupt political and social structures instead of channeling their distress and anger and anxiety for constructive change.[51]

This is a challenge to every person; blind acceptance of the way things are, distancing oneself from the suffering of others, or convincing ourselves that social and political structures "have nothing to do with me" is a falsehood, a self-deceit, that ever since the prophets of old, we have been warned against. Chapter 2 highlights this ancient dilemma and cautions us to be on guard against false prophets who proclaim "peace, peace" when there is no peace (Jer 8:11), a tendency equally prevalent in our own society. Such rhetoric leads people astray, lulling them into a false sense of security. An integrated spiritual pedagogy calls on teachers to challenge this behavior - to champion 'the truth.'

5. Nurturing and sustaining a spiritual pedagogy: some personal suggestions for teachers

Teachers have a responsibility for sustaining their own vocation and improving their schools. A spiritual pedagogy asks teachers, personally and communally, to take on some specific practices. Not all practices suit all people, but some are universal in the

[51] George Jantzen quoted in Ibid., 213.

spiritual domain, such as engaging in good reading and good conversation. These can help teachers talk about their vocation, and to be intentional about their own personal practices. Here I suggest some specific practices,[52] first for teachers, then for the leadership of the school, to promote the five configurations of the spiritual pedagogy of chapter 4.[53] I address the next section directly to the recipients of these suggestions, first teachers, and then leaders.

5.1 For embracing the world as God's creation

Remember your partnership with God; this will lighten the burden of bearing entire responsibility for the outcomes of your efforts. Set boundaries; know your limits and acknowledge when you have done enough. Find some unobtrusive space or symbols in your environment which remind you of the sacred.

Cultivate habits of awareness and openness. Take time to notice the more around you, to reverence the ordinary and notice what is mystery. Remember that life is gift and cultivate a habit of gratitude; give thanks for the many ways that God is revealed throughout your working day. Notice the satisfaction in your work and enjoy the life-giving moments it presents. But realize that not all of your daily work is immediately rewarding. Even as you try to ensure high quality, your standards must be realistic.

5.2 For fostering authentic personhood

Engage in ongoing vocational discernment. "We find our vocation when we discern our own deepest desires, gifts, and aptitudes, and correlate these with what is

[52] I have adapted many of these practices from Groome, *Educating for Life: A Spiritual Vision for Every Teacher and Parent*, chapter 7. Others are modified from authors such as Bollan, Pierce, *Spirituality@Work: 10 Ways to Balance Your Life on-the-Job*.

[53] The five configurations of a spiritual pedagogy as outlined in chapter 4 are: world as God's creation, authentic personhood, others in community, reaching out to the wider community (journeying), and reaching back towards home (homecoming).

worthwhile and needful in the world."[54] Listening to one's calling involves discerning vocation in an ongoing way - on the job, so to speak. Adulthood demands a deeper source of assurance that wealth or success can ever provide.

Choose what and how to teach so that it cares for souls and encourages discernment, and probe and weigh your own thoughts and sentiments. Take time every day for personal reflection in whatever form and as your day is drawing to a close, do an examen of consciousness

Learn to express your interiority, for instance through arts, crafts, or storytelling, and as you do so, be aware of your senses heightening - hearing and sound as in music and dance, the touch essential for sculpture and pottery and molding; the visual powers for painting and the graphic arts; the voice and word of poetry, drama and literature; and the entire range of bodily capacities which lead to creative expressions of human feeling.[55]

5.3 For upbuilding community

Remember that your own praxis is enhanced when shared with another person or support community. Find a community of personal support, both among the school community and outside it. Insiders have a real understanding for the work you do and the environment you do it in; outsiders bring fresh eyes and a different perspective. Friends who offer support and challenge can bring to an issue or situation the realism it might otherwise lack.

Live with imperfection: let go of perfection. It reminds us of our frailty and dependence on God and gives us perspective. Accept the imperfection of others.

[54] Groome, *Educating for Life: A Spiritual Vision for Every Teacher and Parent*, 441.
[55] Harris, *Women and Teaching: Themes for a Spirituality of Pedagogy*, 61.

Give thanks and congratulations for community achievements, not just on the big occasions, but the ordinary practice of giving thanks and celebrating, including self-congratulation.

Be open to hearing the stories of others and make an effort to chat with all members of staff and get to know their personal narratives. Ask colleagues for help when you need it and engage in the mentoring process - formal and informal - as giver and receiver of the counsel of others.

5.4 For journeying in vocation

Be just with those you educate; caution is vital in positions of power. Care for 'poor' students (the economic, physical, emotional, spiritual, and personality/popularity poor).[56] Deal with others as you would have them deal with you and remember the advice of Francis of Assisi: "It is no use walking anywhere to preach unless our walking is our preaching."[57] Focus on how your efforts are humanizing in people's lives. Remember, no teacher can be all things to all students and colleagues. Reconsider and redefine as needed your own definitions of success, and be mindful of small efforts and marginal successes. Break problems down into issues that are tangible enough to be dealt with. Avoid elitism and debilitating guilt; no one has reached an arrival point that does perfect justice.

Engage in works of justice and compassion. Pick some issue of interest to you personally, commit to informing yourself and keeping up-to-date on that issue, and get involved at some level with others who are similarly concerned, so it does not induce paralysis or become a purely academic interest. Join a group, even on-line, that mirrors

[56] Groome, *Educating for Life: A Spiritual Vision for Every Teacher and Parent*, 385.
[57] Francis of Assisi, cited by Pierce, *Spirituality@Work: 10 Ways to Balance Your Life on-the-Job*, 89.

your concern and participate in the blogs. If there is a justice and peace group in the school, think about joining it.

Remember that your lifestyle should inform your identity, so be conscious and intentional in how you interact with students and colleagues, and indeed your community, intimate relationships, personal morality, and your faith (if you are a person of faith, from whatever tradition).

5.5 For homecoming to our commitments

Take care to nourish your own spirituality. Try to maintain a balanced life between work, family, church, community responsibilities, and personal space. Keep your promises. Follow through when you say yes, and institutionalize your decisions; for example if you put reflection time in your calendar, keep the appointment!

Learn to really rest. Decide what is 'enough" (time, effort, and success or failure) and stick to it. Sit with the paradox that we have never done enough and yet have already done enough. Chapter 2 highlighted how the final episode of Moses' career emphasizes the "not yet" of every human attainment when compared with the promises of God. Moses sees, but never sets foot in the Promised Land, a reminder to teachers that they are not the sole carriers of their students' success. They cannot, and should not try, to do it all. Take seriously your responsibility to students without exaggerating your function in their lives.

Engage in ongoing personal and professional development including, but not limited to, reflection and contemplation. Stay up-to-date with changes in your field,

especially in the profession of teaching that rewards but does not necessarily require ongoing professional development.[58] Engage in ongoing education, especially outside your area. We tend to be educated for a job, not for life. Read books, take online courses, or watch educational TV programs that have absolutely nothing to do with your work. It is also important that teachers are well informed about current events and happenings in the world. Therefore, try to keep abreast of current affairs and news developments, through the morning paper, TV news, radio programs, and/or podcasts.

6. Nurturing and sustaining a spiritual pedagogy: some suggestions for the leadership of the school community

Research indicates that quality of school life depends significantly on the principal and the leadership team. The leadership of a school can nurture and sustain a spiritual pedagogy by living into a sense of purpose that fosters the five configurations identified in chapter 4.

6.1 For embracing the world as God's creation

Envision the school as a life-giving community. When a school functions as a life-giving community, it sees an extended role for the teacher, rather than simply subject-matter specialists. It fosters collegiality and shared beliefs regarding not only what students should learn, but also how people should relate. These commitments are particularly important because they bridge the gulf between the intimacy of family and

[58] Ibid., 148.

the impersonal character of state and globalized corporations. Schools can promote human engagement so that the daily life of the school itself becomes a source of considerable meaning for members.

Celebration bespeaks a thankfulness; lift up moments of celebration for the community, for instance a monthly coffee and birthday cake gathering to celebrate the teachers who have birthdays that month. Make hospitality part of the school ethos by ensuring that a person's first point of contact with the school is warm and friendly. Cold efficiency is no substitute for a warm welcome. Parker Palmer asserts that "good teaching is an act of hospitality toward the young, and hospitality is always an act that benefits the host even more than the guest."[59] In ancient nomadic cultures and even today the food and shelter you give to the stranger today is the food and shelter you will receive tomorrow. A potent symbol of welcome is a genuine openness to otherness, particularly those who may not have been traditionally part of a particular school community, for example, learners with special needs, disabilities, or new immigrants. Recognizing resemblance in our difference is a spiritual gift and a primary hope in our pluralistic world.

Attend to the environment with warm colors, plants, high standards of cleanliness, and prominent displays of students and teachers' inventiveness and achievements. Produce a simple but regular bulletin, perhaps once every semester, to honor the work of teachers, for instance teacher publications or presentations.

[59] Palmer, *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*, 50.

6.2 For fostering authentic selfhood

Identify teachers' expressed needs rather than prescribing or presuming what their needs might be. Designate a specific time, even a day out, at the beginning of every school year for personal reflection, for teachers to express their needs, hopes, and plans, to re-connect with themselves after the long summer vacation, and to re-energize in preparation for the year ahead. Prioritize resources for personal and holistic development such as offering a weekend course on the Enneagram or inviting speakers who appeal to teachers by recognizing the work they do and what keeps them going.

Plan teacher enrichment days that nourish the soul of the educator, rather than dealing exclusively with techniques of education. Encourage teachers to become students again - to study or teach disciplines of learning outside their own. By this practice we remember that we do not know it all; it results in openness of mind and space. Cultivate an attitude of teacher empowerment rather than teacher conforming or training by giving them a wide realm of responsibility and discretion.[60]

6.3 For upbuilding community

At the beginning of every school year, build in time for staff team-building, when teachers can re-connect with each other, welcome new members, and remember colleagues who have retired, left, or moved on. Ideally, this should be an off-site trip involving an activity or place of interest, such as a day's hiking, or a visit to a theme park or historical site.

[60] Bryk et al warn that this perspective would sit uneasily, if at all, with existing organizational school structures, modeled as they are on fundamental features of public bureaucracy. See Bryk, Lee, and Holland, *Catholic Schools and the Common Good*, 310.

Provide a forum whereby staff can group together according to interests outside of their own disciplines of learning. Help teachers to identify their common interests and connect with others who share those interests.

Ensure there is provision of pastoral care for all members of the school community and that the school cares for the whole person. Encourage participation in mentoring and induction programs whereby new teachers are supported by the more experienced, and veteran teachers get to know and appreciate beginners

Prioritize communal discernment so that teachers are anchored in shared beliefs and norms. Give a voice for teachers in school government, life, and policy and allow some context for public discourse about school life, for instance by means of a faculty council. Set structures for teachers to easily interact and work towards a collaborative culture rather than permissive individualism or contrived collegiality.[61]

6.4 For journeying in vocation

Identify the catalyst people on staff who engage in issues of social justice, without making them responsible for this concern. If point people are "responsible" for social justice concerns, others might avoid involvement because it is "someone else's job." Invite those catalyst teachers or bring in good speakers to address social justice issues of interest to staff members.

Investigate the possibility of twinning your school with another in a very different setting. For interest, forming a relationship with a sister school in Honduras where both schools swap resources and the relationship is mutually beneficial – not just the first world giving to the third world.

[61] See 2.1 earlier in this chapter.

Remember that no education is value free or neutral. Provide opportunities for teachers to engage in matters of social justice and constructive enlarging encounters with otherness. For instance, plan and invite teachers on service trips, not simply where they are supervising and responsible for students, but outreach experiences that cater to teachers themselves. Such encounters help to turn teachers toward questions about the nature of the person and society and about appropriate and worthy personal and social aims. Regardless of whether or not these opportunities are rooted in religious understandings or are simply efforts at either character formation or personal development, direct people's attention to social justice concerns.

6.5 For homecoming to our commitments

Build the school as something of a home, a holding space for teachers. "Educational policy may reach to the school district, to the school building, even into the classroom, but ultimately it must touch the hearts and minds of teachers and students if significant structural change is to occur."[62] Make the school a 'home' by building it up as a place of welcome and hospitality, by prioritizing an ethos of respect and inclusion, of helpfulness and support; by fostering an attitude of open door and ear, where all feel favored and taken seriously.

Be aware that by means of its dominant language patterns, a school exerts a powerful affect on its members. Attention to language, including tone and quiet, atmosphere and noise, can send a forceful message, not always verbal to its participants. Attend to the character and use of language, by choosing images and language that

[62] Bryk, Lee, and Holland, *Catholic Schools and the Common Good*, 324.

uncover and name, rather than obscure and manipulate, the realties of the world in which we live.

And finally, in a practice that takes us full circle back to those that embrace the world as God's creation, celebrate teachers and their work with birthday festivities and by marking other occasions and milestones that remind them of the valuable and important work they do.

Conclusion

Authentic spirituality is as much about making hard choices in our daily lives, about working with others to make the world a better place, about living well and hospitably, and loving one's neighbor, as it is about prayer and worship. Therefore, a spiritual pedagogy can be appropriated by every teacher and the practices to sustain it described in 'secular' language.

Practices drawn from Ignatian spirituality can help here. For instance it encourages us to make a serious effort to become aware of our own biases and prejudices, to promote a community of discernment and *cura personalis,* and to forward solidarity with others by entering into their lives through service programs. When Ignatian spirituality dialogues with the work of some teacher educators, for instance on professional learning communities, it gives rise to helpful practices for community formation and collegial support. Further, the Ignatian approach lends to ecological issues the weight they deserve. We cannot force results, they are always by gift. We cannot

expect the bounty of a full harvest this side of eternity.[63] But we can start with a spiritual pedagogy and the practices that sustain it. There is a time for everything (Ecclesiastes), every unsettling feeling, bright idea, and spiritual encounter, and in the end is hope.

[63] Groome, *Educating for Life: A Spiritual Vision for Every Teacher and Parent*, 444.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

In retrospect

In the world of the twenty-first century, teaching is a complex, changing, and challenging undertaking. Both the lived reality of teachers and the work of teacher educators reflect this. The realization from within the world of teacher education that reaching a stage of personal and professional development to deal well with this reality is a matter of personal growth, more than formal learning, took me by surprise. I learned from this dissertation that personal growth of teachers is a matter of some concern in teacher education circles. At the same time, there is no framework for discussing personal growth and renewal of teachers in the general conversation on teacher preparation, induction, and support in schools. Further, although presently described in language such as 'emotional understanding', what is more needed is a holistic understanding of teachers and the roles they play inside and out of the classroom. While this would be a welcome development, a holistic understanding must include our inherent spirituality; no definition of the person is complete without the spiritual. As Carl Jung insisted, "bidden or unbidden, God is present."[1]

One notion I held as I embarked on this project was that teachers choose teaching for mostly altruistic reasons; my review of the literature has confirmed this common

[1] Carl Jung, the eminent psychologist, had this quote carved over the front door of his Zurich home, as well as on his tombstone. It is an English translation of the Latin "*Vocatus atque non vocatus Deus aderit*", a quotation he came across when studying Erasmus. The words are said to originate from the reply given by Delphic Oracle to the Spartans when they were planning a war against Athens: "Yes, the Gods will be present, but in what form and to what purpose?" See http://www.irishongrand.com/detail/179 (accessed April 4rth 2008).

assumption. Although there are other motives such as love for a particular discipline of learning, the two most powerful motivators identified by this project include the desire to serve and relationality (in the sense of working with people in respectful and caring mutual relationships). Because these themes reflect the spirituality of the person, my contention was reinforced that the conversation on teaching and teacher preparation and support is inadequate without a spiritual grounding.

Moreover, having identified these motivators, I now better understand how teachers become disillusioned, burned-out, and even leave or harbour intentions to leave the profession when they are treated as something less than persons full with humanity, including their spirituality. When this plays out at a policy level, when the honourable profession of teaching is usurped by political interests and economic values, the results are particularly threatening and destabilising for the vocation of teaching. In other words, my analysis suggested the necessity of a new way of looking at the lived reality of teachers. Of course, the implications are wider than supporting the profession or the teachers in it; we empower students by empowering teachers. We must offer teachers the possibility of an integrated spiritual pedagogy, one that is ongoing and relevant and addresses their expressed needs and interests; this is far more foundational than what they *should* know or how they *ought* to teach. When a teacher is in a healthy happy place, supported personally and vocationally, it cannot but become realised in the quality of their teaching.

The desire to serve and the importance of healthy, positive relationships are spiritual impulses, common to most great spiritual traditions. Sustaining them calls for nurturing the 'spirit' of teachers – their souls. Spiritual overtones of the desire to serve

are heard in the ancient notion of vocation – the call and response stories of the Hebrew Scripture and the biblical wisdom of responding to whatever may be God's particular call for each one of us today. Nonetheless, we have been given the gifts of freedom and will to maintain some freedom and distance in the discernment and daily living out of our vocation. The spiritual dimensions of relationality are also clear; as chapter 2 points out, it is a consistent them among spiritual traditions that good relationships are the human response to the transcendent. Good teachers have a capacity for connectedness; they weave healthy relationship with themselves, their disciplines of learning, and their students and colleagues in the fabric of learning. Indeed, some writers such as Groome and Miller present the nature and purpose of education itself as something hallowed – a complex, spiritual process that requires ongoing attention to the deepest dimensions of our humanity.

Responding to the need for a spiritual pedagogy

Framing these two great motivators as spiritual pieces of the larger whole suggests the need for a pedagogy that honors the spiritual – *the search for and expression of that which is life-giving within a transcendent horizon.*[2] Designing such a pedagogy, one that both appeals to teachers and can be readily implemented, became the challenge of the latter part of this dissertation.

Although there are many challenges to a spiritual pedagogy such as a limited understanding of the role of the teacher, the breakdown of traditional dynamics, and overly focused outcomes-based education and accountability, there is also opportunity in the current climate of postmodernism. Age-old spiritual practices can be adapted to

[2] See chapter 2:1.

support vocation and healthy relationships, and to sustain the teacher in the busy, complex world of teaching. Jesuit education has a long and rich, though not unblemished history. It is rooted in Ignatian spirituality; at its best, it remembers and waters those roots. I grounded my proposed pedagogy in Ignatian spirituality as one particularly appropriate resource among many spiritual traditions for crafting a spiritual pedagogy to sustain teachers today.

Teachers are inherently spiritual because all people are spiritual and capable of personal relationship with God. In the same way, all work done well both reveals and gives glory to God. However, the vocation to teach, in a unique and compelling way, calls forth and requires the spiritual resources of teachers and asks of them a spiritual pedagogy. Such a pedagogy suggests becoming aware of and alert to a sense of purpose and of God's presence in all the messy bits and pieces of daily living. It honors the spirituality of the teaching process and of every person in it. It aims to ground and foster the spirituality of teachers and to resource them in their vocation. Further, it believes that when certain spiritual understandings and principles become part of the teacher, they cannot but become operational in their teaching. In other words, a spiritual pedagogy is both a resource and invitation to teachers to grow and deepen the praxis of their vocation. This conviction was initially a suspicion – a felt insight held incipiently, inchoately, that came to clarity with the many voices and conversation partners I engaged with as I moved through the dissertation.

I am not suggesting that crafting a spiritual pedagogy is the answer to every disillusioned teacher, unruly classroom, or exhausted educator. Indeed, crafting such a pedagogy is pointless unless it stands some chance of implementation. This is a tall order

in any context and especially in a society that enshrines separation of church and state and seems determined to avoid any hint of religious education in schools. However, as Noddings reminds us, it is indoctrination rather than teaching about religion or spirituality that we must avoid. Separation of state and church does not require silence on spirituality. Rather, it expects that public institutions refrain from promoting a religious perspective that must be adopted.[3] The practices I propose in chapter 5 to sustain a spiritual pedagogy can be implemented by any school, regardless of the faith backgrounds, if any, of the participants in it. In proposing a spiritual pedagogy grounded in Ignatian spirituality, I am suggesting it can be a powerful resource to the life, work, and vocation of every teacher. It is hard to imagine how the vocation of the teacher can be supported, if the education process doesn't nurture the soul.

For the future

As I look towards my return to Ireland, I see a nation asking questions about schools and their participants at a whole new level. Schools in Ireland today are also complex, changing, and challenging. Most of these schools – both primary and secondary - are religiously sponsored; the vast majority are managed at least at trustee level by congregations and priests of the Catholic Church. At a time when these groups are passing the stewardship of their schools to lay partners, a key question is what is the nature and value of a Catholic education? This is a contentious question in a country witnessing a strong resistance to the traditional role of the Church in Irish society. Antipathy toward organized religion and institutions that reflect it abounds; old arrangements are not likely to hold for much longer. However, in turning from organized

[3] Noddings, *The Challenge to Care in Schools: An Alternative Approach to Education*, 83.

religion, are the parents of new generations also rejecting their spirituality – the spirituality inherent to every human being? Without an open and honest forum to highlight and discuss these issues, we run the risk of throwing out something of ourselves, of our authenticity and identity as humans, something we know at our deepest core is part of the great response to the questions of life.

This dissertation and my experience of it provokes a further question – is Ireland rapidly heading for a separation of church and state with an education system becoming increasingly secular, and if so, is this a conscious choice of parents, teachers, and policy makers, or is it something we are simply sliding into, unaware and unconcerned? Human beings are gifted at birth with the yearning that is intrinsic to spiritual growth. The restless heart, aching for connection with the larger whole, is part of the human condition; healthy spirituality is a pattern of *being* in relation to self, to others, to the created world, and to God. Science tells us there is no such thing as a vacuum; this life-filled earth of ours simply will not support a void. Christianity is part and parcel of our Irish history; it is woven in the fabric of our landscapes in the form of high crosses and round towers, Mass rocks and places of pilgrimage. It has deeply shaped the Irish psyche, remains a source of history and tradition, and seeps into the imagination of every new generation. If we dismiss our Christian heritage as a grounding for our spirituality, as a place to go with all the hopes, dreams, sadness, and disappointments of human living, what will take its place? What addictive behaviours, compulsive tendencies, fundamentalist notions, or even experiments with magic and the occult will storm in to fill the spiritual void? What values do we lose in the process, and perhaps more significantly, what values move in to

replace those thrown out? As Yeats once asked: "What rough beast, its hour come round at last, Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?"[4]

I am convinced there is a great value in defending at least some system of religiously sponsored schools, where teachers have the option of teaching and parents of sending their children to a school with a faith based identity and mission. In some tragic ways, we are moving toward the schools for profit model, run like businesses, unapologetically administered as economic interests. Catholic schools working from a healthy sense of identity, mission, and tradition can go a long way to give counter witness to the situation TS Eliot lamented in the lines

> Where is the Life we have lost in living?
> Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?
> Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?[5]

I propose that our schools are a forum for learning both about and from our Christian heritage, for critiquing it in a spirit of retrieval, and reclaiming what is life-giving and hopeful in these challenging times. They can and must re-articulate a vision grounded in spirituality that is appealing to parents, teachers, and indeed students, although it may not be under the doctrinal control of the Church.

This dissertation has something very positive to offer to the Irish context. Of course, this is not the only forum to which it can contribute. Indeed, it can speak to any school or teacher open to a spiritual pedagogy. While I have written this dissertation for any teacher in any school, for everywhere and everyone, now that I re-assess my own Irish context after a four year absence, I particularly see the contribution it can make

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[4] 'The Second Coming', in W.B. Yeats, *The Poems*, ed. Daniel Albright (London: Everyman/J.M. Dent, 1994), 235.
[5] Thomas Stearns Eliot, *Choruses from the Rock*(accessed April 3rd 2008); available from http://www.westminster.edu/staff/brennie/wisdoms/eliot1.htm.

there. That, for the moment, is my starting point. I am not about to predict an outcome; my wish is simply to make a contribution. Nonetheless, I am thoroughly convinced that the Catholic school is a place to reap the wisdom of our Christian heritage and transform it with and for each new generation.[6]

CEIST: Catholic Education Irish Schools Trust

One way that this project can make a contribution to the Irish situation is through involvement with one of the new trust boards recently set up by groups of religious congregations. One of these is CEIST – Catholic Education Irish Schools Trust. This is a new collaborative trustee body for the second level schools of the Presentation Sisters, the Sisters of the Christian Retreat, the Sisters of Mercy, the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, and the Daughters of Charity. The founders of CEIST honor their rich heritage in Catholic education and wish to pass its stewardship to lay colleagues, so that Catholic education will be an option in the Irish education system of the future. CEIST is the Gaelic term for 'question'; an acronym that reminds people that an important role of education is expanding the capacity for critical thinking. It also implies that this is an open project rather than a ready-made answer. Catholic education seeks to enable people to ask the great questions of life and seek answers in light of Gospel values. Interestingly, the symbol of CEIST is a Celtic spiral, evoking the ancient heritage of Ireland and the reminder that we were of God long before St Patrick came to our shores

[6] With net immigration, cultural diversity, and religious pluralism becoming defining features of Irish demographics for the first time since the foundation of the state, a further deep challenge facing Ireland is how to live and articulate a Christianity that embraces and partners with other world religions and indeed the most socially responsible forms of secular endeavors. That reality must also energize the spiritual quest of educators and their educational mission.

almost sixteen hundred years ago. It also represents the paths of life, the journeys that spiral outwards but emanate from a point deep within every person.

I propose a spiritual pedagogy as a starting point for a body such as CEIST. At the heart of my proposed spiritual pedagogy is a belief in the human capacity for transcendence and the desire to participate in something meaningful and worthwhile. A spiritual pedagogy can nurture the vocation for teaching, and sustain and encourage teachers in ways that allow them to thrive and flourish rather than simply survive. Living into our vocation is good for us and serves us well because it is the path to leading our lives with integrity. Moreover, by supporting caring, committed, persevering, and effective teachers, we support the students who most need them.

A spiritual pedagogy at work in Ireland today

A spiritual pedagogy can speak to a number of tensions at work for teachers in Ireland today. To begin, it offers a life-giving approach to the vocation of teaching that recognizes the central role of the teacher, and sets out to support and nourish the person of the teacher, rather than prescribe or evaluate. With its emphasis on ongoing discernment and the importance of supportive community, a spiritual pedagogy helps teachers tap into their inner resources and participate in school support systems for the motivation that the teaching commitment entails. Next, a spiritual pedagogy can offer teachers, even those disillusioned or disaffected from organized religion, a place to go with their hopes and sorrows, disappointments, and dreams, with their great questions of life. Finally, a spiritual pedagogy can act as a dialogical bridge between teachers and students and among teachers themselves. It holds an empathetic orientation toward

people based on a welcome for and appreciation of the worth of every person, regardless of appearance, customs, or faith background - if any.

A school that supports a spiritual pedagogy offers a vision of persons-in-community based on the twin beliefs of the dignity of every person and the responsibility of each to advance peace, justice, and human welfare. The effects of a spiritual pedagogy, supported by a school which sees itself as a community of learners with unique persons, inherent with dignity, are far-reaching. For instance, Bryk et al found that the reduced dropout rates and unusual effectiveness of some high schools for at-risk students are not characteristic of private schools in general, but emerge from a value system: fundamental beliefs about the dignity of every person and a shared responsibility for advancing a just and caring society.[7] When the school acts as a community of care for teachers as well as students, and for the neighborhood and world outside of it, students are most likely to be formed into caring people. My thesis throughout is that a spiritual pedagogy makes such caring more likely to emerge. Of course, what is modeled at every level is crucial. Specifically, how leaders deal with teachers is reflected in how teachers deal with students.

Concluding thoughts

In order for teachers to fulfill their vocation in ways that are life-giving for themselves and others they must be in a healthy spiritual place themselves and feel at home in their schools. When we look after our teachers rather than expecting them to give without limit and pay attention to sustaining their spiritual resources, it places them in a healthy position to engage fully in teaching. Moreover, if they do this faithfully, that

[7] Bryk, Lee, and Holland, *Catholic Schools and the Common Good*, 312.

very kind of fulfillment of their vocation will also sustain them in their vocation. Teachers are most likely to give up if they are not teaching in ways that 'help souls' or if they are left holding one end of a caring relationship and their own souls become tired and dry for want of being spiritually nurtured in return.

A spiritual pedagogy grounded in Ignatian spirituality can be adapted for life-giving practices to sustain the vocation of the teacher, regardless of the faith tradition, if any, of the teacher or the school. For instance, we can teach the discernment of spirits and consolation and desolation by guiding participants to recognize what lifts them up and what brings them down, what seems to give them life and what seems to drain life from them. We can help them to trace the patterns of these movements in their lives by adapting Ignatian spiritual practices such as the examen, which can help teachers explore and work on their relationships with self, God, others, and with the created world. Schools can provide age and experience-appropriate opportunities whereby teachers can learn to follow and understand the movements within their own hearts, past experiences of all types, interactions with others both in and outside of the school community, and the dynamics of history, social structures, and culture.

Chapter 2 suggested that our present climate of postmodernity might provide a heretofore almost unthinkable opportunity to put spirituality as part and parcel of the human condition back on the educational table. Here is a moment to realize that opportunity, or at least engage with it seriously. As I close this dissertation but continue its work, I am deeply convinced not only of the value but the necessity of a spiritual pedagogy to support the vocation of teachers and through them, the holistic education of

young people and the life of schools. What was heard "in the deep heart's core"[8] and verified by scholarship now must become my life praxis as a teacher of teachers.

[8] 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree', in Yeats, *The Poems*.

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